

School of Theology at Claremont



10011459285



The Library
of the
CLAREMONT

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

1325 North College Avenue
Claremont, CA 91711-3199
1/800-626-7820



The Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT

WEST FOOTHILL AT COLLEGE AVENUE
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

2341
565
1928a
v. 4

THE DISCIPLE'S COMMENTARY
ON THE NEW TESTAMENT : *By*
DAVID SMITH, D.D. : : IN FIVE
VOLUMES : : VOLUME FOUR : : *FROM*
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES; THE EPISTLE OF
ST. PAUL TO THE ROMANS; *TO* THE
FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES OF
ST. PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS



Ray Long & Richard R. Smith, Inc.
New York 1932

Theological Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY THE CAMELOT PRESS LIMITED, LONDON AND SOUTHAMPTON

1932

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

And thereafter Jesus Himself also sent forth by them from East even unto West the holy and incorruptible message of the eternal salvation.

THE DISCIPLE ARISTION.

INTRODUCTION

THOUGH it bears no signature, there is no reasonable doubt that the Book of Acts was written by St. Luke, the author of the Third Gospel, since both are addressed to the same personage, "his Excellency Theophilus" (cf. Ac. i. 1 with Lk. i. 3, where see exposition), and both alike abound in medical phrases betraying the pen of "the beloved physician" (see exposition of Lk. i. 1-4).

Moreover, our author's prefatory reference to "the former treatise" which he had addressed to Theophilus, is not merely an explicit affirmation that the Gospel was his work but a discovery of his contemplated design. For, where our Version has "the former treatise," the original properly signifies "the first volume"; and consider what, with a literary artist like St. Luke, this must have implied even in an age when linguistic niceties were ignored in common parlance. It is an intimation that he had more than two volumes in view. His Gospel, the story of the Great Beginning (cf. Ac. i. 1), was "the first volume"; the Book of Acts, a continuation thereof, telling how the Church fared under the Holy Spirit's guidance, was the second; and he meant to write at least a third, bringing the record of her sufferings and triumphs down to his own day. The Book of Acts brings it down only to the year 60, and there it abruptly terminates, leaving St. Paul a prisoner at Rome. It is plain that something arrested the historian's pen; and what could it be but his death about the year 90 (see Introduction to the Gospels, p. xxv) when he still had the happenings of some thirty years to recount?

Nor is this the sole evidence that the Book of Acts is an unfinished work. It abounds in passages awkwardly expressed and sometimes hardly intelligible, all the more surprising that St. Luke was a true artist; and these leave no doubt that it is a posthumous publication, lacking the author's final revision.

It represents his first draft ; and had he been permitted, he would have smoothed its roughnesses and elucidated its obscurities.

Happily its blemishes have in large measure been authoritatively obliterated. On the taking of the city of Lyons by the Huguenots in the year 1562 there was discovered in the monastery of St. Irenæus a Greek manuscript of the four Gospels and the Book of Acts, dating at the latest from the sixth century ; and it is well for sacred scholarship that it passed into the possession of " the men of the new learning." In the year 1581 it was gifted by Theodore Beza to the University of Cambridge, where it is treasured under the designation of the Codex Bezaë, " Beza's Manuscript." Its special value is that it represents the text of the Book of Acts which, as his quotations therefrom demonstrate, was employed by St. Irenæus in the second century and which, thus early, had already been established in the Western Church. It is a recension of the original text, remedying the latter's imperfections ; and from his manifest familiarity with Southern Galatia and the adjacent Province of Asia it would seem that the reviser, like St. Luke (see close of exposition of xiii. 13-52), belonged to Pisidian Antioch. He was probably a disciple of the sacred historian, and he honoured his master's memory by retouching his unfinished work.

SUMMARY

BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM

(i-vi. 6)

	PASSAGE	PAGE
THE ASCENSION	i. 1-14	11
ELECTION OF MATTHIAS	i. 15-26	17
THE DAY OF PENTECOST (ii) :		
1. THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ADVENT	ii. 1-13	21
2. PETER'S SPEECH	ii. 14-40	27
3. FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT	ii. 41-47	31
HEALING OF A LAME BEGGAR	iii	35
ARREST AND ACQUITTAL	iv. 1-31	41
A DISASTROUS EXPERIMENT	iv. 32-v. 15	48
RENEWED HOSTILITY	v. 16-42	54
SERVING TABLES	vi. 1-6	60

EVANGELISATION OF JUDÆA AND SAMARIA

(vi. 7-ix. 31)

ARRAIGNMENT OF STEPHEN	vi. 7-15	67
HIS DEFENCE	vii. 1-50	70
HIS MARTYRDOM	vii. 51-viii. 3	78
MISSION OF PHILIP (viii. 4-40) :		
1. SIMON THE MAGICIAN	viii. 4-25	81
2. THE ETHIOPIAN CHAMBERLAIN	viii. 26-40	85
THE CONVERSION OF SAUL	ix. 1-19a	89
HIS TESTIMONY	ix. 19b-31	94

EVANGELISATION OF HEATHENDOM

(ix. 32-xxi. 14)

	PASSAGE	PAGE
A MISSION OF PETER (ix. 32-xi. 18) :		
1. AT LYDDA AND JOPPA	ix. 32-43	99
2. AT CÆSAREA (x-xi. 18) :		
(1) TWO VISIONS	x. 1-23 ^a	103
(2) BAPTISM OF CORNELIUS	x. 23 ^b -48	107
(3) THE QUESTION BEFORE THE CHURCH	xi. 1-18	112
SYRIAN ANTIOCH	xi. 19-26	115
FAMINE IN JUDÆA	xi. 27-xii	119
PAUL'S FIRST MISSION (xiii, xiv) :		
ORDINATION AT ANTIOCH	xiii. 1-3	126
THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS	xiii. 4-12	128
SOUTHERN GALATIA (xiii. 13-xiv) :		
1. PISIDIAN ANTIOCH	xiii. 13-52	131
2. ICONIUM : LYSTRA : DERBE	xiv. 1-20	140
THE RETURN JOURNEY	xiv. 21-28	144
THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM	xv. 1-35	146
PAUL'S SECOND MISSION (xv. 36-xviii. 22) :		
THROUGH SOUTHERN GALATIA	xv. 36-xvi. 5	151
MEETING OF EAST AND WEST	xvi. 6-10	155
1. PHILIPPI (xvi. 11-40) :		
(1) CONVERSION OF LYDIA	xvi. 11-15	159
(2) IMPRISONMENT OF PAUL AND SILAS	xvi. 16-24	163
(3) THEIR RELEASE	xvi. 25-40	166
2. THESSALONICA AND BEREÆA	xvii. 1-15	171
3. ATHENS	xvii. 16-34	178
4. CORINTH	xviii. 1-17	185
THE RETURN JOURNEY	xviii. 18-22	192
PAUL'S THIRD MISSION (xviii. 23-xxi. 14) :		
VISITATION OF SOUTHERN GALATIA	xviii. 23	195
EPHESUS (xviii. 24-xix) :		
1. THREE MONTHS' JEWISH MINISTRY	xviii. 24-xix. 8	197
2. TWO YEARS' GENTILE MINISTRY	xix. 9-20	201
3. A RIOT IN THE CITY	xix. 21-41	204

SUMMARY

7

PAUL'S THIRD MISSION—*continued*.

THE RETURN JOURNEY (xx-xxi. 14) :

	PASSAGE	PAGE
1. TROAS	XX. 1-12	210
2. MILETUS	XX. 13-38	215
3. TYRE : PTOLEMAIS : CÆSAREA	XXI. 1-14	220

A PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST

(xxi. 15-xxviii)

ARRIVAL AT JERUSALEM	xxi. 15-26	225
UPROAR IN THE TEMPLE	xxi. 27-39	228
ADDRESS TO THE MOB	xxi. 40-xxii. 29	231
ARRAIGNMENT BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN	xxii. 30-xxiii. 11	235
A JEWISH PLOT	xxiii. 12-35	239
BEFORE THE PROCURATOR FELIX	xxiv	243
APPEAL TO CÆSAR	xxv. 1-12	248
STATE VISIT OF KING AGRIPPA	xxv. 13-27	251
PAUL'S <i>APOLOGIA PRO VITA SUA</i>	xxvi	254
VOYAGE TO ROME (xxvii-xxviii. 16) :		
1. A TEDIOUS COURSE	xxvii. 1-12	259
2. TEMPEST-DRIVEN	xxvii. 13-26	264
3. SHIPWRECK	xxvii. 27-44	269
4. WINTERING ON MELITA	xxviii. 1-10	274
5. ARRIVAL AT ROME	xxviii. 11-16	278
INTERVIEW WITH THE JEWISH LEADERS	xxviii. 17-31	281

BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM

i-vi. 6

THE ASCENSION

i. 1-14

1 *The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,*

2 *Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen :*

3 *To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God :*

4 *And, *being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.*

5 *For John truly baptized with water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

6 *When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ?*

7 *And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*

8 *But ye shall receive †power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

9 *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up ; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

10 *And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel ;*

11 *Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

* Or, eating together with them.

† Or, the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.

12 *Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.*

13 *And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.*

14 *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*

OBERVE how deftly St. Luke here resumes his narrative, not merely linking this the second volume of his history with the first but indicating wherefore the first was insufficient. His Gospel is the first volume, and it is the story not of "all that Jesus did and taught" but merely of "all that He began both to do and to teach." His Incarnation was but the inauguration of His redemptive ministry. Risen and glorified, He is evermore the Saviour, working by the Holy Spirit whom, according to His promise in the Upper Room (cf. Jo. xiv-xvi), He commissioned after His departure to continue His ministry. Hence this book, traditionally known as "The Acts of the Apostles," were more justly entitled "The Acts of the Holy Spirit."

Observe too how in introducing his second volume he takes occasion to rectify a misunderstanding in the first. So reticent were the chosen witnesses regarding the ineffable manifestations of the Risen Lord (see exposition of Mt. xxviii) that outside their circle it was supposed that He "was taken up" on the evening of the Resurrection Day. So had St. Luke conceived when he wrote his Gospel (cf. xxiv. 1, 13, 33, 36, 50); but, still prosecuting his diligent investigations (cf. Lk. i. 1-4), he presently ascertained the fact. And now he pointedly affirms it. The interval between the Resurrection and the Ascension was not one brief day but forty; and during their course the Lord "presented Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs"—one of St. Luke's professional phrases. In his diagnosis a physician observed "signs" or "symptoms"; and when these were confirmed, they became

"proofs"—"infallible proofs." And even so, regarding the wonder of the Resurrection, St. Luke had investigated the "signs," had watched their development, and had recognised them as "infallible proofs." The subsequent progress of events was a confirmation of the initial diagnosis.

And now look at the sequel and see how movingly our Lord's final departure is portrayed.

1. What of that phrase (ver. 4), a single word in the original, variously rendered in our Version "being assembled together with them" and "eating together with them"? Its proper significance, already suggested by manuscript evidence, is determined by its use in the Greek papyri recently exhumed from the Egyptian desert. It is a colloquial variant of the word which the Evangelists employ where they tell how during the Passion Week the homeless Man of Sorrows would go forth each eventide with His disciples to Mount Olivet and there not merely, as our Version has it, "lodge" or "abide" but "bivouack" in the Garden of Gethsemane (cf. Mt. xxi. 17; Lk. xxi. 37: where see exposition). So is it written here: "And, bivouacking with them, He charged them." That spot of tragic yet hallowed memory, where they had witnessed His Agony and His Arrest, was the scene of this His last earthly meeting with them.

2. It evinces how greatly they needed the Holy Spirit's illumination that they still clung to their Jewish idea of the Messianic Kingdom. The Lord's crucifixion had slain their fond hope of a national deliverance, but His Resurrection had revived it; and they gathered round Him and asked if the time had now come for its fulfilment.

Consider His reply. He no longer as aforetime (cf. Mt. xxiv. 36; Mk. xiii. 32) disclaimed personal knowledge of that "day and hour," forasmuch as He was now released from the limitations of His estate of humiliation. He rather tells them that it was not for them to know the councils of God. These He had "put in His own (not "power" but) authority"; and their proper concern was their mission. Meanwhile they must await their promised baptism with the Holy Spirit. Then all that was now dark to them would be illumined, and they would

receive "power" to accomplish their task. Truly a mighty task, which no power of their own could achieve. Their mission was the winning of the world; and to this end they were to testify of Him in an ever-widening circuit: first "in Jerusalem and all Judæa"—the country of the Jews (see exposition of Lk. iv. 44); then in despised Samaria (see exposition of Lk. ix. 51-56); and finally "unto the uttermost part of the earth"—the dark domain of heathendom.

3. "As they were looking," it is written (ver. 9), "He was taken up, and a cloud caught Him away from their eyes." So the original properly signifies; and it can be nothing else than a description which St. Luke had from the lips of a spectator of the scene enacted in his wondering view. For conceive what it was that came to pass. The veil of sense had been lifted from the disciples' souls, that so they might see what the natural eye cannot see and hear what the natural ear cannot hear; and when the veil fell, the vision faded (see exposition of Lk. xxiv. 31). It was as though their sight had suddenly waxed dim, or a cloud had enveloped them, blotting out the landscape. And so it is written further: "This Jesus shall so come, in like manner as ye beheld Him passing." No otherwise will He be manifested when He "comes again" whether at the believer's death or at His glorious appearing (see exposition of Mt. x. 23). It will not be a reincarnation but, even as when of old He manifested Himself to His disciples after His Passion, a lifting of the veil that so, "the eyes of our heart being enlightened," we may perceive Him, as He is evermore (cf. Mt. xviii. 20, xxviii. 20), present in our midst.

4. Wherefore is St. Luke so careful to explain that the scene of the Ascension was Mount Olivet and that it was distant from Jerusalem "a Sabbath Day's journey," that is, two thousand cubits, the distance which a Jew might travel from his home on the Day of Rest? The reason is that he had written in his Gospel (xxiv. 50) that the Lord "led them out as far as to Bethany"; and evidently Jewish readers, understanding by Bethany the village of that name situated over the crest of Olivet fully three thousand cubits from Jerusalem (cf. Jo. xi. 18), had been offended by what seemed to them a violation of the

Sabbath law. And so now St. Luke explains that by Bethany he had meant not the village but the western slope of the mountain (see exposition of Mt. xxi. 17).

Since the Garden of Gethsemane, situated in the district of Bethany, was just two thousand cubits from Jerusalem, it was legitimate to journey thither on the Sabbath. For, as St. Chrysostom observed, the argument implies that it was the Sabbath Day when the Lord "led them forth as far as to Bethany"; and here as elsewhere the ecclesiastical calendar errs in celebrating the Feast of the Ascension on Thursday. See what really happened according to St. Luke's account. During a space of forty days, reckoned not from His Resurrection on the first day of the week but from His Passion on the preceding Friday, the Lord manifested Himself to His chosen witnesses; and then on the Sabbath (our Saturday) He appeared to the Eleven in Jerusalem, and led them out to Olivet and "bivouacked" with them there. On the Jewish reckoning the day closed at eventide; and since night had fallen ere He was done communing with them, the Sabbath was past and the new day had begun when the cloud caught Him away from their eyes. Hence, even as it was "on the first day of the week early, while it was yet dark," that He left the sepulchre, so was it also when He went home to the Father. Sunday commemorates not only His Resurrection but His Ascension.

5. Reading that "when they were come in (to the city) they went up into (not "an" but) the upper room," one might suppose that it was that hallowed room where they had eaten the Passover with the Master (cf. Lk. xxii. 12; Mk. xiv. 15). But it is another word, peculiar to St. Luke in the New Testament (cf. Ac. ix. 37, 39, xx. 8), that is employed here in the original. Observe the difference. A house in an ancient city had usually three storeys, distinguished as "the ground-storey," "the above-ground storey," and "the uppermost" or "top storey." In a private house such as Mary's where, it appears (see exposition of Mk. xiv. 12-15, 51, 52), the Master and His disciples ate the Last Supper, the "above-ground" rooms, remote from the noise of the street, were the pleasantest; and it was an "above-ground" that Mary furnished for her honoured

guests. But in a crowded tenement the "top storey" rooms were the meanest, insomuch that "to live under the tiles" was in Latin proverbial of a state of poverty. Here the word of the original is "top storey," and it fitly designates the poor lodging of the Eleven—a mere loft, bare and comfortless yet spacious enough for the reception of their intimates.

And who were the latter? First, not "the women" but simply "women," as St. Luke has it, characteristically marking the new standing of despised womankind (cf. Introduction to the Gospels, pp. xxiif.)—especially those devoted women who had stood by the Cross (cf. Mt. xxvii. 55, 56; Mk. xv. 40, 41; Lk. xxiii. 49, 55; Jo. xix. 25) and with them in reverent charge the mother of our Lord. "And," adds St. Luke, quietly introducing a glad surprise, "His brethren" (see exposition of Mt. xii. 46–50). Hitherto unbelievers, what was it that had turned their hearts? Tradition, corroborated by St. Paul (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 7), alleges that James was persuaded by a vision of the Risen Lord; and his testimony would persuade the rest.

ELECTION OF MATTHIAS

i. 15-26

15 *And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)*

16 *Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.*

17 *For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.*

18 *Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity ; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.*

19 *And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem ; inso-much as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.*

20 *For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein : and his *bishoprick let another take.*

21 *Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,*

22 *Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*

23 *And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.*

24 *And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,*

25 *That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.*

26 *And they gave forth their lots ; and the lot fell upon Matthias ; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*

* Or, office, or, charge.

ONLY a week intervened between the departure of our Lord and the Holy Spirit's advent, but much happened during that brief interval. For one thing, a beginning was made in organising the infant Church. The believers in the city were enrolled, and the register attained surprising dimensions: "there was a multitude of names, about an hundred and twenty." It would have been well had the Apostles rested here; but on the motion of Peter, always so impetuous, they proceeded forthwith to fill the unhappy vacancy in their ranks. It was indeed a momentous step and surely ill advised, and in taking it they outran the providence of God. For their business meanwhile was to wait in prayerful expectancy for the promised grace of the Holy Spirit; and their procedure proves how greatly they needed His guidance.

See what their procedure was. First they prayed, and evidently it was Peter who voiced their petition. For that Old Testament phrase (cf. Ps. cxxxix. 23), a single word in the original, "Thou which knowest the heart," occurs in the New Testament only once again (Ac. xv. 8), and there on Peter's lips. So far they did well; but what followed? Instead of trusting to the guidance which they had sought and so making their choice they resorted to sortilege—a mode of divination practised of old by pagans and Jews alike (cf. 1 Sam. xiv. 41, 42; Jon. i. 7) but already reprobated even by pagans of the more intelligent sort. It is significant that never again, so far as the sacred record shows, was it employed by the Apostles; and their employment of it now evinces how ill qualified they were for the office which they so rashly usurped. They made their choice, but their choice was not God's, as the event proved. For God had another in view, and he it was that in due season "received the place of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside" (cf. Dt. xvii. 20; literally "transgressed")—Paul, an Apostle not of men but by the will of God.

What of the two nominees? One was Joseph; and since his name was so common, he was distinguished by an epithet variously written Barsabas, "the son of Saba," and Barsabbas, which if it signifies "son of the Sabbath," may indicate that he had been a strict Pharisee (cf. exposition of Mt. xii. 1-8).

And it accords herewith that the name which, after the Jewish fashion of those days, he bore in his intercourse with Gentiles, was Justus, the Latin for "righteous." Nothing is recorded of him beyond a fable of his drinking a deadly poison which, by the Lord's grace, did him no hurt (cf. Mk. xvi. 18).

The other was Matthias—an abbreviation of Mattathias, the honoured name of the father of the Maccabees. And it stands to his account that he wrote a book of "traditions," signifying memoirs of the sayings and doings of our Lord. Two quotations therefrom have been preserved. One is "Wonder at the things before you"—probably an unwritten saying of our Lord, reminiscent of Wordsworth's lines :

We live by Admiration, Hope, and Love ;
And, even as these are well and wisely fix'd,
In dignity of being we ascend.

The other is a most salutary admonition : " If an elect man's neighbour sin, the elect man hath sinned. For had he so conducted himself as the Word dictateth, the neighbour also would have been rebuked by his life into not sinning."

Ere leaving the passage observe (1) its account of the traitor's miserable end (vers. 18, 19). This presents two difficulties. One is that it is an explanation where none is required. For the Apostle's hearers were well aware of the tragedy so recently enacted in their midst ; nor did they, being Jews, need to be told what Aceldama signified "in their proper tongue." And the other difficulty is that this gruesome tale ill accords with St. Matthew's grave and moving account of the traitor's end (xxvii. 3-5). The solution is that the two verses are parenthetical, and neither are they part of Peter's speech nor were they written by St. Luke. Popular imagination, after its wont, busied itself with the traitor's memory, weaving legends of ever-accumulating horror. It was told, for instance, in the second century how "as an example of impiety" he was stricken with a loathsome disease, and ere the miserable end his festering body was so swollen that a lane in the city where a waggon could pass was too narrow for him. Here is a like legend, which some careful reader noted on the margin of his copy of the

sacred narrative and which, as frequently happened in the hands of a careless scribe (cf. exposition of Mt. xii. 40 ; Lk. xxii. 43, 44 ; Jo. v. 4, vii. 53-viii. 11), was intruded thence into the text.

(2) That double quotation from the Book of Psalms (lxix. 25 ; cix. 8). It is singularly apposite, since according to the ancient and most reasonable interpretation those two psalms were wrung from David's indignant heart by the treason of his trusted counsellor Ahithophel (cf. 2 Sam. xv-xvii) who, when his counsel was turned to foolishness, "got him home unto his city, and set his house in order, and hanged himself." It was indeed an arresting coincidence (cf. Mt. xxvii. 5) ; and Peter, reading that ancient scripture with Jewish eyes (see exposition of Mt. ii. 15), justly construed it as a premonition of the traitor's doom. And see how the coincidence is pointed by that word which our Version, following Wycliffe, unhappily renders "bishopricks." The original signifies "overseership" (cf. xx. 28), denoting properly a shepherd's office and so chiming with "habitation," which also was a pastoral term, signifying "a homestead" or "sheepcote." Observe the picture : a faithless shepherd, a desolate homestead, a vacant charge.

THE DAY OF PENTECOST (ii)

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ADVENT

ii. I-13

1 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

2 *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

3 *And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

4 *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

5 *And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.*

6 *Now *when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were †confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.*

7 *And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans ?*

8 *And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born ?*

9 *Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,*

10 *Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,*

11 *Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.*

12 *And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this ?*

13 *Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*

* Gr. *when this voice was made.*

† Or, *troubled in mind.*

PENTECOST or "the Fiftieth," so named because it was celebrated seven weeks or, on the inclusive reckoning of the ancients, fifty days after Passover (cf. Lev. xxiii. 15, 16), was originally the feast of thanksgiving for wheat-harvest and later also a commemoration of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. It always fell on "the morrow after the Sabbath"; and thus, as it was on a Sunday that our Lord rose from the dead and on a Sunday that He ascended on high, leading captivity captive, so was it on a Sunday that, according to His promise, the Holy Spirit came in His room. It were a grievous misunderstanding to suppose that the Holy Spirit's advent was the beginning of His blessed ministry. For even as our Lord was the Eternal Saviour and His Incarnation was only His manifestation, so had the Holy Spirit been present from the first. But never hitherto had He been recognised, and what we know not is for us as though it were not. "All the laws of the Universe have had existence from the beginning, yet how recently is it that Electricity has been discovered? and do we yet know all which this power implies? Did the earth ever do other than go round the sun? yet how long is it since man found this out?"

Albeit God had vouchsafed to His people of old foreshadowings of the truth, yet these were but dim. "The spirit of the Lord" signified for them merely a divine influence and never a Divine Person. It was symbolised to their minds by two expressive and beautiful images—wind (cf. Ezk. xxxvii. 9; Jo. iii. 8, where see exposition) and light (cf. Gen. i. 2, 3); and since it was to Jews that the manifestation was vouchsafed, it was accompanied by both these familiar symbols, that they might recognise the Heavenly Visitant—"the sound as of a rushing mighty wind" or rather "an echo as though of a mighty breath sweeping along," and "cloven tongues like as of fire" or rather "tongues as it were of fire passing from one to another" (literally "being distributed unto them"). See what this means. The Latin poet speaks of the light pouring on a child's head and "with harmless touch licking his soft curls and pasturing about his temples." And it is the same metaphor here. "Tongues as it were of fire," a lambent blaze,

played about the disciples' heads and irradiated their faces, even as the face of Moses shone while the Lord talked with him on the Mount (cf. Ex. xxxiv. 29, 30, 35). A miracle indeed but an abiding miracle. Evermore, says our novelist, "the sacred fire from heaven is as gentle in the heart as when it rested on the heads of the assembled twelve, and showed each man his brother, brightened and unhurt."

What was the scene of the transcendent revelation? It is designated "the house where they were sitting"; and plainly it cannot have been "the upper room," that poor loft, "where they abode" (i. 13). For though this was indeed a spacious apartment, neither it nor any other private dwelling could have accommodated the multitude which presently gathered about them. Write "the House, where they were sitting," and the situation appears. The scene was that place of general resort, the outer court of the Temple, "the House of God" (cf. Mt. xxi. 13), which was then thronged with worshippers attending the Feast; and it may well be that the Apostles, apprehensive of molestation, were sitting apart in that place of open retirement, Solomon's Cloister (cf. iii. 11, v. 12; Jo. x. 23, where see exposition).

And now see what happened. When the light of Heaven came streaming into their souls and illumined their darkness, their lips were opened and poured forth their new-found gladness, "as the Spirit gave them utterance." Here there is nothing strange or incomprehensible. Bunyan tells how when he was groping in darkness of soul, he heard a sermon which was to him like the breaking of the day. "Yea, I was now so taken with the love and mercy of God that I remember I could not tell how to contain till I got home. I thought I could have spoken of His love, and have told of His mercy to me, even to the very crows that sat upon the ploughed lands before me." And who can forget "Rabbi" Duncan's story of his discovery of God in his student-days at Aberdeen as he was walking pensive out of the city—how he "danced on the Brig o' Dee with delight"?

The sudden chorus echoed through the silent court, and (not "when this was noised abroad" but) "when this voice

arose," the startled worshippers streamed to the spot "in confusion" or "pell-mell"—a word peculiar in the New Testament to St. Luke—to learn what was a-do. All that had reached their ears was an outcry, but when they got near and heard what the Apostles were saying, their wonder was extreme. For, it is written, they heard them "speaking with other tongues." Every one of those worshippers, so far travelled—from the distant East, from Asia Minor, from Arabia, from North Africa, from Crete, from Rome—heard them "in his own language" (ver. 6)—"his own language (not "tongue") wherein he was born" (ver. 8).

Now what may this mean? It is an inveterate misconception that the Apostles were miraculously endowed with the faculty of speaking foreign languages, and so it came to pass that they could address all those diverse nationalities in their several tongues. The idea is untenable. For not only is there no suggestion thereof in other passages where "speaking with tongues" is mentioned (cf. x. 46, xix. 1-6), especially St. Paul's illuminating discussion of the gift as it was exercised some five and twenty years afterwards in the church at Corinth (cf. 1 Cor. xiv), but it is discordant with the state of the world in those days. It is not the least striking of the providential preparations for the Gospel that the ancient curse which lighted on the children of men at the building of Babel (cf. Gen. xi. 1-9), when their language was confounded that they might not understand one another's speech, had been done away. See how it came about. The ambition of Alexander the Great and his successors had been to weld the nations by the universal imposition of Greek civilisation; and it was so far achieved that the Greek language prevailed in all the countries environing the Mediterranean. The native languages did not perish. Each country retained its vernacular. Its people were bilingual. They remembered their mother tongue and spoke it *con amore* in homely and familiar intercourse, but their public language in street and market was the Common Greek, the *lingua franca* of the wide Empire which Alexander had created and which was composed of those various countries here enumerated.

Hence emerges the wonderful truth, so strikingly illustrated

by the Greek papyri recently excavated from the sands of Egypt. The long strife which preceded the Saviour's advent had brought sorrow on the nations, yet all the while an Unseen Hand was thereby breaking down the ancient barriers; and when He came, "the whole earth was of one language and of one speech," insomuch that it was possible for the Apostle of the Gentiles to travel far and wide and freely proclaim his message to all those diverse peoples—Syrians, Phrygians, Lycaonians, Macedonians, Greeks, and Romans.

And now observe what is written in the story of the Day of Pentecost. The Greek word for "language" here (vers. 6, 8) is "dialect"; and originally, though often used in the sense of "language"—the Greek language, for example, as distinguished from the Persian or the Latin, it properly bore the sense which it has in English, signifying not a particular language but a local variation thereof. Thus in classical times Doric, Attic, and Æolic were not distinct languages: they were "dialects" of Greek. And so in later days when there was one universal language, the Common Greek, its local variations were termed "dialects."

See then what happened on the Day of Pentecost. All those far-gathered worshippers spoke Greek, but each spoke it in his own dialect; and though they were all mutually intelligible, the speech, for example, of a Mesopotamian, his accent and pronunciation, would sound outlandish to a North African. And the marvel is defined by that astonished question: "Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?" The Galileans were plain, unlettered folk, occupied with their fields and vineyards on the plains and hillsides or their boats and nets on the Lake; and when they visited Jerusalem at the festal seasons, they were the jest of the citizens for their manners, their dress, and above all their "dialect." For they spoke with a strong burr, and as soon as they opened their mouths "their speech bewrayed them" (cf. Mk. xiv. 70; Mt. xxvi. 73). And here is the marvel. The disciples were Galileans, yet when they broke into impassioned speech, there was no jarring note, no rude provincialism, nothing offensive to the ears of that assemblage of strangers, devout Jews who had repaired

to the Holy City from the countries of their adoption to celebrate the Feast and who, since they could afford the long pilgrimage, must have been people of substance and education.

And what was it that had so refined and elevated their speech? It was the grace of the Holy Spirit. It was a marvel, but it was no miracle. "Religion," says Coleridge, "is, in its essence, the most gentlemanly thing in the world. It will *alone* gentlilise, if unmixed with cant; and I know nothing else that will, *alone*." It is told of Thomas Chalmers that on the occasion of his first public appearance in London that distinguished statesman and orator George Canning went to hear him, and for a moment he was offended by the preacher's broad Fife-shire accent, that "speaking thick, which nature made his blemish"; but presently this was forgotten. "It was a living man sending living, burning words into the minds and hearts of men before him, radiating his intense fervour upon them all"; and he confessed that no eloquence had ever so moved him. "The tartan beats us all." So was it with the Apostles. When the grace of the Holy Spirit was shed abroad in their hearts, it wrought its accustomed miracle, refining their natures, ennobling their minds, and elevating their thoughts.

See how the marvel was received. It occasioned universal "amazement and doubt" or rather "perplexity." "What meaneth this?" some asked; and these were the worshippers from afar who had no prejudice against the Apostles. But there were others who "mocked" (cf. xvii. 32). And who were these? They were, as Peter presently intimates (ver. 14), "men of Judæa and dwellers in Jerusalem"; and here on the lips of the Jewish Apostle "Judæa" signifies not, as so often on the lips of the Gentile historian (cf. i. 8), the country of the Jews, the Holy Land, but the southern province whose capital was Jerusalem and whose people were so disdainful of the rude Galileans. It was they that mocked, and their sneer was more offensive than it appears. For "new wine" was medicated wine, prescribed by physicians as an emetic; and so it was a coarse jest, likening the impassioned eloquence of those despised Galileans to the eructation of brain-sick frenzy.

2. PETER'S SPEECH

ii. 14-40

14 *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words :*

15 *For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.*

16 *But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel ;*

17 *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh : and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams :*

18 *And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit ; and they shall prophesy :*

19 *And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath ; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke :*

20 *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come :*

21 *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

22 *Ye men of Israel, hear these words ; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know :*

23 *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain :*

24 *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death : because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*

25 *For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved :*

26 *Therefore did my heart rejoyce, and my tongue was glad ; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope :*

27 *Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

28 *Thou hast made known to me the ways of life ; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.*

29 *Men and brethren, *let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.*

30 *Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne ;*

31 *He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.*

32 *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.*

33 *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

34 *For David is not ascended into the heavens : but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,*

35 *Until I make thy foes thy foot-stool.*

36 *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

37 *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do ?*

38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

39 *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

40 *And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*

* Or, I may.

THE surest evidence of the miracle of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the transformation which it wrought on the Apostles. Hitherto fearful of the enmity of the rulers and shrinking from observation, they are henceforth stout and courageous in the confession of their faith. See how boldly Peter now steps forward and faces the wondering multitude. "He took his stand with the eleven, and lifted up his voice, and " not merely " said " but " spake forth unto them " (cf. xxvi. 25)—a brave word, peculiar to St. Luke in the New Testament and properly denoting inspired utterance (cf. ii. 4). It was the grace of the Holy Spirit that made him so bold ; and he began with a stern rebuke of that coarse sneer of the Judæans, contemptuously tearing it to tatters. It was but nine o'clock in the morning ; and since it was required that on a feast-day a Jew should fast, neither eating nor drinking, until noon, how could he and his comrades be drunken ?

Thus dismissing the calumny, he proclaims what it was that they had just witnessed. It was a fulfilment of Scripture—that ancient prophecy of Joel (ii. 28–32) where, when the land had been stripped bare by a plague of locusts, he assures his famished people that, if they laid the visitation to heart, the Lord would " restore to them the years that the locusts had eaten," and not merely refresh their land with fertilising rain but pour out His Spirit upon them and avenge them on their heathen oppressors.

Observe here a manipulation of that ancient scripture, so significant that it is surely no mere accident of free quotation (ver. 17). The Prophet wrote : " Your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions," but the Apostle transposes the clauses : " Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." And thus written it is a moving appeal. For youth is the time for seeing visions ; and only as we see visions in the freshness of youth and resolutely pursue them in strenuous manhood, will it be ours to dream dreams in the quietude of age—dreams of assured faith, sweet content, and immortal hope.

And now he turns to that argument so potent in those early days when the wonder of it was still fresh—the miracle of the

Resurrection. Observe how his tone changes. He is done with that ribald calumny of "the Judæans," and he addresses the whole assemblage, styling them "Ye men of Israel" or rather "Sirs, ye Israelites." It was a sacred and honourable designation (see exposition of Jo. i. 48); and he employs it in view of the crime which he must lay to their charge, in order to assure them that they had not thereby forfeited their birth-right and there was still forgiveness for them would they but repent and believe (cf. ver. 38). That crime was the crucifixion of Jesus; and whatever plea of ignorance they might offer, they stood doubly condemned, forasmuch as (1) He had been approved God by His miracles in their midst, and (2), Israelites as they were, they had wrought His death (not "by wicked hands" but) "by the hand of lawless men," "men without the Law," Pilate and his officers, thus allying themselves with the heathen oppressors of their race and their religion. Even so their crime was heavy, but far heavier in view of the event. It was none other than their Messiah that they had crucified. For it had been written of old by the Psalmist (Pss. xvi. 8-11, cx. 1) that the Messiah would be raised from the dead and exalted to God's right hand; and this prophecy had now been accomplished by the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus. Of neither could they doubt. The evidence of the former was the testimony of its eye-witnesses. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof," says the Apostle, turning to his eleven comrades, "we all are witnesses." And of His Ascension the evidence lay before their own eyes in the heavenly grace which, to their amazement, He had shed forth—"this which ye now see and hear."

3. FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

ii. 41-47

41 *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized : and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

42 *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

43 *And fear came upon every soul : and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.*

44 *And all that believed were together, and had all things common ;*

45 *And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.*

46 *And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread *from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,*

47 *Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

RICH and abundant were the fruits of that great day. Peter's appeal, pointed as it was by the testimony of their revered Scriptures, went home to the hearts of his hearers, especially the devout Jews who had come from afar to celebrate the Feast ; and " there were added on that day about three thousand souls." The meagreness of the narrative here marks this as one of the numerous passages which stamp the Book of Acts as an unfinished work (see Introduction). The situation is rather suggested than presented, yet the suggestions, elucidated here and there by interpretative variants in the early manuscripts, are easily intelligible. For

* Or, at home.

example, whereas it is written that on confessing their faith the three thousand were baptised, it is evident that so large a work was not immediately accomplished. Neither would one day have sufficed nor was there in Jerusalem water enough or a meeting-place available for so vast an assemblage. Evidently they left the city and betook themselves where the sacred office might be peacefully and fittingly discharged. And it may well be that the scene was that place of hallowed memory, Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John had baptised and whither our Lord had repeatedly retreated with His disciples from the molestation of the rulers (cf. Jo. i. 28, iii. 22, iv. 1, x. 40). It would be no inconvenience for the strangers from afar, since there was no accommodation in the city for the multitudes that thronged to the Feasts and they were wont to lodge outside, mostly bivouacking in the open (cf. Mt. xxi. 17). Nor was the sealing of the converts' faith by the Sacrament of Baptism the only business. They needed instruction and counsel; and so it is written that "they continued steadfastly in the teaching and fellowship of the Apostles, in the breaking of bread"—the Sacrament of the Holy Supper (cf. Mt. xxvi. 26; Lk. xxiv. 30, 35; 1 Cor. xi. 24)—"and prayers."

All this implies a considerable sojourn in their retreat; but at length the strangers took their departure to their distant homes, enriched with a grace which they had never anticipated when they came up to the Feast and carrying to their countrymen the Good Tidings which had gladdened their own hearts. The Apostles returned to Jerusalem and there resumed their ministry in the midst of their little community of disciples—the hundred and twenty (cf. i. 15) augmented by such of "the Judæans and dwellers at Jerusalem" as had been won on the Day of Pentecost. And now they found themselves confronted by an embarrassment which, obscure in our text, is illumined by an amplification thereof in several manuscripts (ver. 43): "And fear was wrought for every soul. But many wonders and signs were wrought through the Apostles in Jerusalem; and great fear was upon all." See what this means. The rulers were discomfited by so signal a triumph of the heresy

which, they had flattered themselves, had been extinguished by the death of our Lord ; and they were meditating, as the sequel proves, further measures for its suppression (cf. iv. 29). It was their threatenings that alarmed the community of believers, "working fear for every soul." And what was it that restrained them? The Apostles quietly prosecuted their ministry, working miracles in the Lord's name ; and these inspired their enemies with fear—at once a superstitious dread and a prudential apprehension of exciting a tumult in the city by molesting the popular benefactors (cf. ver. 47 ; iv. 16).

And another embarrassment of a practical sort confronted them. The Apostles and their most effective coadjutors were Galileans. They had forsaken their homes and employments in the far north ; and how could they maintain themselves, strangers as they were, in a hard and unfriendly city, prosecuting the while their evangelical ministry? The need was urgent, and the community rose to the occasion. It was a saying of the ancient philosopher Pythagoras, which had passed in those days into a proverb, that "the things of friends are common" ; and they bravely put it in practice by pooling their resources—"their possessions and goods," more properly "their gettings and their hoardings," income and capital. Observe here how the subject abruptly changes (ver. 46)—another evidence of the text's lack of revision. It is the Apostles that are now in question. The rank and file of the believers still pursued their avocations, earning what was needful ; and the Apostles were free to devote themselves to their ministry. Their employment was twofold : (1) "day by day," like the Master when He sojourned at Jerusalem, "continuing stedfastly in the Temple," discoursing in the outer court, that place of public resort ; and (2), when they returned thence, "breaking bread" (cf. ver. 42) not "from house to house" but "at home." Thus their poor lodging (cf. i. 13) was a very sanctuary. Their every meal was a holy communion ; for they made it sacramental by breaking and blessing the bread after the Lord's example. Such is the significance of the godly usage of Grace before Meat. "Eating," says William Law, "is one

of the lowest actions of our lives ; it is common to us with mere animals ; yet we see that the piety of all ages of the world has turned this ordinary action of an animal life into a piety to God, by making every meal to begin and end with devotion."

HEALING OF A LAME BEGGAR

iii

1 *Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.*

2 *And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple ;*

3 *Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.*

4 *And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.*

5 *And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them,*

6 *Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none ; but such as I have give I thee : In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.*

7 *And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up : and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

8 *And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.*

9 *And all the people saw him walking and praising God :*

10 *And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple : and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.*

11 *And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.*

12 *And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this ? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk ?*

13 *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus ; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.*

14 *But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you ;*

15 *And killed the *Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead ; whereof we are witnesses.*

16 *And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know : yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.*

17 *And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.*

18 *But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.*

19 *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord ;*

20 *And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you :*

21 *Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*

22 *For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me ; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.*

23 *And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.*

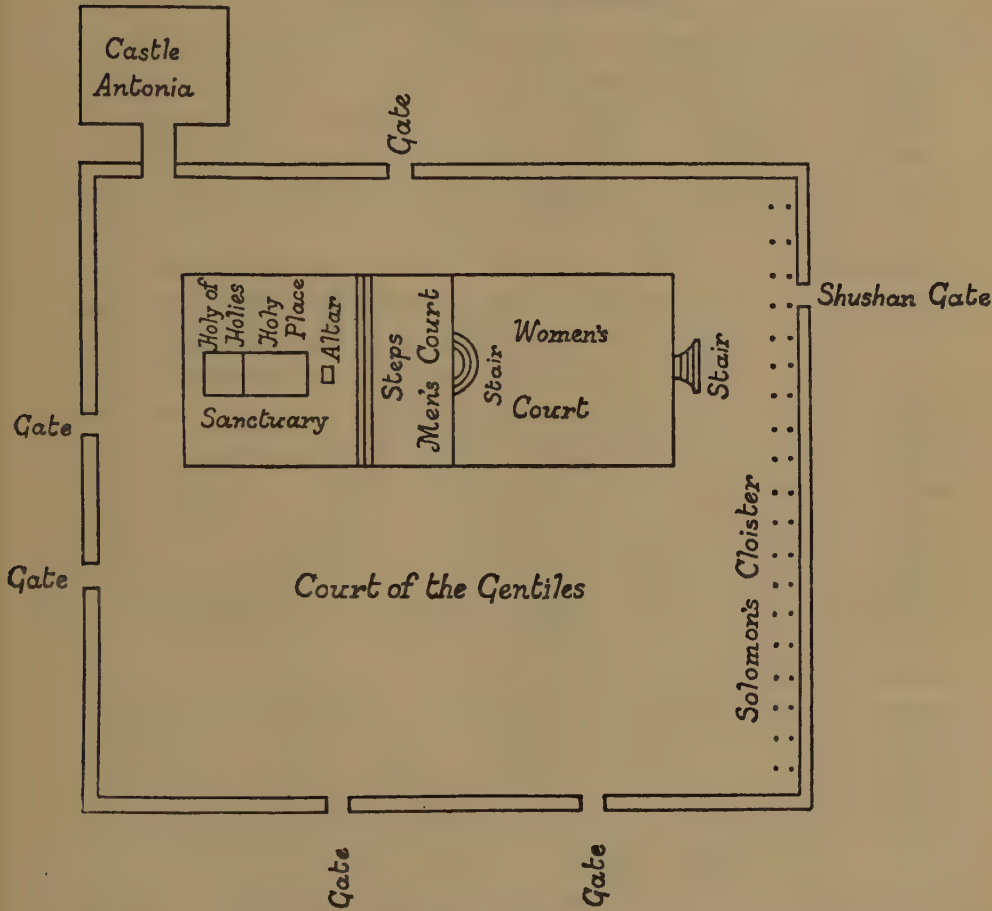
24 *Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.*

25 *Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.*

26 *Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.*

THE ninth hour, 3 p.m., was the hour of afternoon prayer, and the two Apostles were repairing to the Temple not merely that they might join in the common devotion but that they might afterwards converse with the worshippers on the great theme. They found a larger opportunity than

PLAN OF THE TEMPLE



they had anticipated. It was the fashion in mediæval Europe, as Sir Walter Scott tells in his story of the Earl of Oxford's visit to Strasburg, for mendicants to beset the entrances of the cathedrals "to give the worshippers an opportunity of discharging the duty of almsgiving, so positively enjoined as a chief observance of their church," often, as that learned Jesuit Father, Cornelius a Lapide, observes, occasioning grave scandal

by their shameless and disorderly importunities. Even so was it in Jerusalem of old. The favourite station of mendicants was the Shushan Gate, the eastern access to the Temple precincts. Shushan was the winter residence of the Persian kings of old (cf. Neh. i. 1) ; and this the finest of the entrances to Herod's magnificent Temple was named after it by the later Jews in remembrance of their fathers' captivity and deliverance. Shushan means "a lily," and the Shushan Gate was distinguished by a golden frieze of lilies ; whence, since the lily was an emblem of beauty, it was popularly known as "The Beautiful Gate."

This poor creature, helpless from his birth and now over forty years of age (cf. iv. 22), had his accustomed station at the Beautiful Gate ; and wherefore is this so pointedly remarked ? The reason is that he was no stranger to Peter and John, inasmuch as they had seen him lying there every time they visited the Temple. Never hitherto had he solicited them, since they were poor men and had no alms to bestow. But now he had heard what was a-doing in the city—how the believers "had all things common" and the poorest of them was well provided, and moreover how the Apostles were working miracles ; and when these their leaders appeared, he would hope that they might afford him not merely alms but healing. And so he importuned them. His appeal surprised them. What, they wondered, was he seeking ? Was it simply alms, or had he a deeper sense of need, a nascent faith ? They "fastened their eyes upon him." "Look on us," said Peter ; and, reading in the wistful face a large yearning, he healed him in the Lord's name. "In the name," he said, "of Jesus Christ the Nazarene"—the contumelious designation written over the Cross (cf. Jo. xix. 19), at once ascribing the miracle to the Crucified Saviour and making it a revelation of His divine glory.

See what ensued. Aware how the incensed rulers were watching for an occasion against them, the Apostles would fain have passed quietly into the Temple-court ; but the man would not let them go ! He "held on to them" and, incredulous of the reality of the miracle, kept leaping to prove it, and on finding it true kept "praising God"—the same word

which St. Luke uses in his story of the Nativity (Lk. ii. 13, 20) of "the multitude of the heavenly host praising God" and again of the shepherds "glorifying and praising God" as they returned from Bethlehem. His delighted demonstrations, breaking the reverent stillness of the sacred precincts, attracted attention; and the Apostles, apprehensive of being called to account by the Temple-guards, instead of proceeding to the place of prayer in the Men's Court turned aside into Solomon's Cloister which skirted the eastern side of the outer court (see exposition of Jo. x. 23). But they did not thus elude observation. The crowd of worshippers ran thither to see what was a-do; and Peter, accepting the situation, came boldly forward and addressed them.

His speech was an accusation (vers. 12-16), an extenuation (17, 18), and an exhortation (vers. 19-26). First addressing the assemblage as "Sirs, ye Israelites" (cf. ii. 22) and by this winsome courtesy disarming their resentment, he told them who it was that had wrought the miracle—not himself or his fellow but Jesus (not "the Son" but) "the Servant (cf. Is. lii. 13, liii. 11) of the God of their fathers," whom they had impiously betrayed and denied. Then styling them affectionately "brethren," he makes generous allowance for them. They had done it in ignorance. It was, however, perilous thus to exonerate them; and lest he should "stir their hearts and minds to mutiny and rage" against their teachers and rulers who had so fatally misled them, he extends the plea of ignorance to the latter also. They and their leaders alike had sinned ignorantly; but that plea no longer availed in view of the Resurrection—God's open vindication of His Servant. And so he passes to his final appeal. Observe the true rendering (vers. 19, 20): "Repent therefore and turn (see exposition of Jo. xii. 37-41), that your sins may be blotted out, to the end that there may come seasons of refreshment from the face of the Lord." "Refreshment" (cf. 2 Tim. i. 16), literally "cooling" (cf. Lk. xvi. 24), was a pleasant word in the sultry East. Homer uses it of the sea-breezes cooling the brow and again of the leech's ointment cooling a throbbing wound. And even such was the benediction which the Saviour had brought not alone

to Israel but to all mankind. The Jews were dreaming of a day when the Messiah would appear, a mighty King of David's lineage, and "restore the kingdom to Israel" (cf. i. 6), granting the oppressed nation respite from her long tribulation and healing of her sore wounds; but the Apostle tells of a larger consummation—"the (not "restitution" but) restoration of all things," the redemption of humanity, the righting of all the wrong and outrage wherewith earth is filled.

ARREST AND ACQUITTAL

iv. 1-31

1 *And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the *captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,*

2 *Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.*

3 *And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day : for it was now eventide.*

4 *Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed ; and the number of the men was about five thousand.*

5 *And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,*

6 *And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.*

7 *And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this ?*

8 *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,*

9 *If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole ;*

10 *Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.*

11 *This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.*

12 *Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled ; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.*

*Or, ruler.

14 *And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.*

15 *But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,*

16 *Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.*

17 *But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.*

18 *And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.*

19 *But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.*

20 *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*

21 *So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.*

22 *For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.*

23 *And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.*

24 *And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:*

25 *Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?*

26 *The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.*

27 *For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,*

28 *For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.*

29 *And now, Lord, behold their threatenings : and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,*

30 *By stretching forth thine hand to heal ; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.*

31 *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together ; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*

PETER had ended his discourse. His argument and his appeal had gone home to his hearers' hearts, and he and John were "talking to the people," answering their questions and explaining to them the way of salvation (cf. ii. 37, 38), when the captain of the Temple-guard appeared on the scene. The wonder is that he had not, as they anticipated, appeared sooner ; and St. Luke accounts for his tardiness when he mentions that he was accompanied by the Priests and the Sadducees, and the offence was not the disturbance which the miracle had occasioned but the Apostles' "preaching through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." This faith was denied by the Sadducees (see exposition of Mt. xxii. 23), and the party's representatives in the crowd, taking offence at the Apostles' proclamation of it, had delated them to the Priests who, being themselves Sadducees, had lent a ready ear to the complaint and ordered their arrest. Since "it was now eventide" and the Sanhedrin might not legally convene for their trial until next morning (see exposition of Mt. xxvi. 57), they were meanwhile detained. It was an attempt to crush the hated heresy, but it failed. The converts were not deterred from confessing their faith ; and it was found, when the storm subsided, that the believers in the city numbered some "five thousand men"—men, as the original signifies, apart from women and children (cf. Mt. xiv. 21).

"On the morrow" or rather "toward the morrow" (cf. Lk. x. 35), as early as it might, the Sanhedrin convened. Observe how here as generally in the Gospels the court is designated

not by its name but by its constituents: "their Rulers," that is, according to common usage, the Chief Priests (see exposition of Mt. xxi. 23); "the Elders"—the ordinary members, representing both the rival parties of the Sadducees and the Pharisees; and "the Scribes"—the learned order of the Pharisees, counterbalancing the Sadducean Chief Priests. On this occasion, however, the latter were predominant, since the original properly runs: "toward the morrow there were gathered together the Rulers and the Elders and the Scribes in Jerusalem"—such of them as were present in the city. Many of those learned men were employed elsewhere as "teachers of the Law" (cf. Lk. v. 17), and it was impossible for them to attend a meeting so hastily convoked. Thus the court was dominated by the priestly party, the Apostles' bitter enemies, under the leadership of that crafty veteran Annas.

See how cavalierly the prisoners were treated. It was the fashion of the exorcists to mutter mysterious names in their magical incantations (cf. xix. 13); and the question wherewith the President Caiaphas, the acting Chief Priest, opened the trial: "In what manner of power or in what manner of name did ye this?" was designed to prejudice the case by accounting the Apostles common charlatans and their miracle an imposture. What wonder that Peter, always so impulsive, took fire and retorted with indignant scorn of consequences? The miracle was no trick of black art but "a good deed—a beneficence"; and it was wrought "in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene (cf. iii. 6), whom" he proceeds, laying to their charge an impious crime, "ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead."

What could they say? The erstwhile cripple was present in the court (cf. ver. 10). It does not appear that he too had been arrested. Rather had he voluntarily compeared and was standing there among the spectators eager to testify on his benefactors' behalf. His mere presence was a demonstration of the reality of the miracle; but there was another spectacle which still more confounded the judges. And this was the bearing of the Apostles—their "boldness" or rather "freedom of speech," albeit they were "unlearned and ignorant men."

So our Versions have it, ill expressing the original. "Unlearned" should rather be "illiterate," denoting one who had never attended college or sat at the feet of the Scribes, those *litterati*, as the name properly signifies. And the original of "ignorant" denoted one who held no professional office, a non-expert, answering precisely to "layman" in the large sense which that word bore in Elizabethan English.

And here was the wonder—that, though "illiterate and laymen," yet the Apostles spoke, in old Dr. Henry Hammond's quaint phrase, "with a great extraordinary presentness of speech and elocution." It was in truth a recurrence of the marvel of the Day of Pentecost. Now even as then, "filled with the Holy Spirit" (ver. 8), they "spake with other tongues; as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Hence their "freedom of speech." It was the eloquence of "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." Once already, as they listened to our Lord's discourse in the Temple-court (cf. Jo. vii. 15), had the Sanhedrists experienced the like; and they recognised the source of the grace which was poured into the lips of those Galileans. "They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." They had passed through no earthly college, but what academic curriculum is comparable to three years of daily fellowship with Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge?" They had drunk of His grace, and it breathed from their lips. And so were they his witnesses, like that beautiful saint, Robert Murray McChesney, of whom it was told that when he visited a home it seemed after his departure a heavenly place. His presence had sanctified it, and it was as though "Holiness to the Lord" were written on the walls.

The case collapsed. The miracle was no imposture, and further proceedings would have excited a storm of popular indignation. In a private consultation the Sanhedrists reluctantly recognised that they must acquit the prisoners. They would have consulted their own dignity had they discharged them unconditionally; but, apprehensive lest the hated heresy should, as the original signifies, "eat further into the people" like a cancer (cf. 2 Tim. ii. 17), they warned them to refrain

from "speaking or teaching in the name of Jesus," thus exposing themselves to a humiliating defiance, like that of Socrates when, required to have done with philosophy on pain of death, he answered: "I shall obey God rather than you; and while I have breath, I shall never cease from exhorting you and showing the truth."

While the trial was in progress, the rest of the Apostles and their intimates were gathered, doubtless in their lodging (cf. i. 13), anxiously and prayerfully awaiting the issue. Thither Peter and John betook themselves, and told their story. See what is written here: "On hearing it they all lifted up their voice to God with one accord." How could this be? Were it written that "they all lifted up their heart," it would mean that one led them in prayer, voicing the common thankfulness; but how could they all "lift up their voice"? The quotations (vers. 24-26), suggest that, with much appropriateness, they sang the hundred and forty-sixth and the second Psalm, and then one led their common supplication for courage still to "speak the Word with all boldness." And after his wont (see exposition of Lk. i. 46) St. Luke, the Church's earliest hymn-writer, has commemorated the scene in this magnificent canticle, which should be arranged in rhythmical lines. (In ver. 27 read "Thy holy Servant Jesus"; cf. iii. 13.) It is a plain evidence hereof that in the original the passage abounds in words and phrases characteristic of St. Luke, stamping it as his composition.

It was indeed a momentous crisis in the fortunes of the infant Church. Those feeble men had need of encouragement; and what wonder that God, regardful of His cause upon the earth, vouchsafed them a token? "The place was shaken wherein they were gathered together." Since it is the same word that St. Luke uses when he tells afterwards (xvi. 26) how the prison at Philippi was "shaken" by an earthquake, it may be that now also it was a natural tremor that shook the house—no unfrequent occurrence in Jerusalem (see exposition of Mt. xxvii. 45, 51); yet none the less was it God's response, recalling to them His visitation of their fathers in the wilderness (cf. Ex. xix. 16-18; Ps. lxviii. 7, 8).

O God, what time Thou didst go forth
Before Thy people's face ;
And when through the great wilderness
Thy glorious marching was ;
Then at God's presence shook the earth,
Then drops from heaven fell ;
This Sinai shook before the Lord,
The God of Israel.

A DISASTROUS EXPERIMENT

iv. 32-v. 15

32 *And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul : neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own ; but they had all things common.*

33 *And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus : and great grace was upon them all.*

34 *Neither was there any among them that lacked : for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,*

35 *And laid them down at the apostles' feet : and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.*

36 *And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,*

37 *Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.*

1 *But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,*

2 *And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.*

3 *But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart *to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?*

4 *Whiles it remained, was it not thine own ? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power ? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart ? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.*

5 *And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost : and great fear came on all them that heard these things.*

6 *And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.*

* OR, to deceive.

7 *And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.*

8 *And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much ? And she said, Yea, for so much.*

9 *Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord ? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.*

10 *Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost : and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.*

11 *And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.*

12 *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people ; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.*

13 *And of the rest durst no man join himself to them : but the people magnified them.*

14 *And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)*

15 *Insomuch that they brought forth the sick*into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.*

THAT generous expedient which the believers adopted when in the flush of their early enthusiasm they pooled their resources, bravely performing that unwritten saying of our Lord : " The weak shall be saved through the strong," was designed to relieve a temporary embarrassment (cf. ii. 44-47) ; but so successfully did it operate while they were still a small brotherhood that they were emboldened to continue it when by daily accessions (cf. ii. 47) their numbers had increased to some " five thousand men " (cf. iv. 4), making with the women and children a community of full ten thousand. The early devotion was unabated, and it was stimulated by the example of a large-hearted disciple who was destined to a high and honourable career. He was not a Judæan but a native of

* Or, in every street.

the island of Cyprus, being probably one of those worshippers from afar who shared in the grace of the Day of Pentecost (cf. ii. 5). He was of priestly lineage and of good estate since he owned (not "a field" but) "a demesne" in his native island. Evidently on his conversion he had settled in Jerusalem that he might aid in the service of the Gospel; and such was his zeal that he sold his property and contributed the proceeds to the common store. His name was Joses, the Greek form of Joseph, but he was best known as Barnabas, which may signify "son of exhortation," though more probably, since he lacked the gift of eloquence (cf. xiv. 12), it signifies "son of consolation," truly descriptive of his approved disposition, so "sweetly reasonable, gentle, kindly, and accessible," as St. Chrysostom has it.

It was indeed magnificent devotion; but since it was purely voluntary, there were some of the believers in the city, and these in no wise the least generous, who retained their property, preferring to employ it beneficently at their own discretion. A notable example is Mary, the mother of John Mark and aunt to Barnabas (cf. Col. iv. 10 R.V.), that widowed lady who had provided in her spacious house the upper room where our Lord ate the Passover with His disciples (see exposition of Mk. xiv. 12-15, 51, 52), and who, forasmuch as she retained her property, was by and by able to succour the Apostles in time of need (cf. Ac. xii. 12). "Spend-thrifts," says sage old Robert Burton, "are fools; and so are all they that cannot keep, disburse, or spend their moneys well." And it was not selfishness but wise discretion and fidelity to the stewardship wherewith God had entrusted them that restrained such as Mary from sharing in that well-intentioned but ill-advised experiment in social reorganisation. For ill-advised indeed it was; and, like every similar experiment in the history of civilisation, it issued, as the ensuing narrative demonstrates (cf. v. 1-11; vi. 1-6; xi. 27-30), in shame and disaster.

An immediate consequence was that it encouraged knavery; and this is impressively exemplified in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. What was the motive which actuated the unhappy pair? It was not mere hypocrisy, an ambition to win the

praise of devotion cheaply. Rather was it unscrupulous greed. So long as they held their property, they were well off and might not participate in the distribution of the common good ; and so they hatched a fraudulent device. By a surrender of their property, professedly complete but only partial, they would qualify themselves for free maintenance while still enjoying the emolument of their reserve.

Observe these features of the narrative. (1) The scene of the rencontre was within doors (cf. ver. 9), whether at the Apostles' lodging or some other rendezvous where the community's business was transacted. (2) Evidently the character of Ananias was notorious. His generosity was suspect, and on his presenting his contribution Peter challenged his good faith. (3) In a sultry climate immediate interment was necessary ; and the mournful task was performed by (not " the young " but) " the younger men " (ver. 6), so styled in distinction from " the Elders of the Church "—a primitive order known later, when the office was instituted, as " the Deacons," who were charged with the administration of the Church's business. (4) The burial-place was outside the walls of the city, and they were returning thence three hours later when Sapphira, wondering at her husband's protracted absence, appeared on the scene.

The sudden death of Ananias, if it stood alone, might reasonably be accounted as a natural occurrence, due to the shock of so shameful an exposure ; but the double tragedy hardly admits of a natural explanation. It was a judicial stroke, exemplifying the miraculous powers which the Lord had conferred on the Apostles for the achievement of their difficult mission (cf. Mt. x. 1) and which, on the testimony of St. Luke and the still earlier testimony of St. Paul (cf. Gal. iii. 5 ; 1 Cor. xii. 10 ; 2 Cor. xii. 12), they actually exercised. It was indeed a useful endowment ; and their miracles, wrought in the name of Jesus, constituted an impressive evidence of His Resurrection and Lordship. Yet it was a perilous endowment, as this terrible incident shows. It is true that the offence demanded stern and exemplary dealing. Otherwise " the affair would have opened a wide door to hypocrites and idlers, and would have quenched the benevolence of the richer sort. It would not only have

damaged the infant Church's repute in the world but have cut its very sinews." Nevertheless judgment is a dread office ; and surely after this their earliest exercise thereof the Apostles would realise how heavy was their responsibility and how slow they should be to pronounce sentence of doom.

Consider the sequel. This is one of those ill-constructed passages which stamp the Book of Acts as an unfinished work (see Introduction), and the sting of it lies in that awkward parenthesis (vers. 12b-14). The purport hereof is that, though the Apostles' ministry continued all the more powerfully by reason of the awe which that terrible example created, the popular feeling toward them was changed. It was now winter, and since they might no longer teach in the open court of the Temple, they, like our Lord (cf. Jo. x. 23), sought the shelter of Solomon's Cloister. There they sat teaching, but they sat alone. " Of the rest," that is, the rank and file of the believers, " none durst join himself to them " or, as the word is elsewhere rendered, " cleave to them " (Mt. xix. 5 ; Lk. x. 11 ; Ac. xvii. 34 ; Rom. xii. 9), " keep company with them " (Ac. x. 28). It denotes trustful approach and affectionate intimacy (cf. viii. 29, ix. 26) ; and St. Luke has told how it came to pass that their happy relationship with their disciples was thus interrupted. After the tragedy " great fear came on all them that heard these things " ; " great fear came upon all the Church " (vers. 5, 11). The stern judgment invested the Apostles with dread ; and their disciples no longer " clave unto them " as a wife cleaves to her husband, no longer came to them with the story of their griefs and errors,

As children that have done amiss
Come to their father's knee.

It was a grievous impoverishment of their ministry ; and the change of feeling toward them is illustrated by the behaviour of the people when, like the heathen folk of Ephesus (cf. xix. 12), they laid their sick in the streets that Peter's shadow might fall upon them. It means that they regarded him as a magical personage. It was a superstitious notion, yet it availed. For

it bespoke a true faith ; “ and,” says Sir Walter of his mediæval hero’s devotion, “ its purpose being sincere, we can scarce suppose it unacceptable to the only true Deity, who regards the motives and not the forms of prayer, and in whose eyes the sincere devotion of a heathen is more estimable than the specious hypocrisy of a Pharisee.”

Is it not well that the apostolic gift of miracles was a temporary dispensation, and that mercy and judgment alike are God’s prerogative ? Terrible would it have been for mankind had it continued in the hands of those priestly tyrants who in the Dark Ages hurled their ban of excommunication against such as displeased them, whether men or nations, princes or people.

Thou shalt stand cursed and excommunicate :
 And blessed shall he be that doth revolt
 From his allegiance to an heretic ;
 And meritorious shall that hand be call’d,
 Canonized and worshipp’d as a saint,
 That takes away by any secret course
 Thy hateful life. . . .
 Philip of France, on peril of a curse,
 Let go the hand of that arch-heretic ;
 And raise the power of France upon his head,
 Unless he do submit himself to Rome.

Well is it that the thunderbolts of ecclesiastical commination were but ghostly terrors which its victims laughed to scorn when the light broke and dispersed the baleful shadows of ignorance, and that the Church is armed with no other weapons than reason and love.

Let not this weak unknowing hand
 Presume Thy bolts to throw,
 And deal damnation round the land
 On each I judge Thy foe.

RENEWED HOSTILITY

v. 16-42

16 *There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits : and they were healed every one.*

17 *Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with *indignation,*

18 *And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.*

19 *But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,*

20 *Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people, all the words of this life.*

21 *And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.*

22 *But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,*

23 *Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors : but when we had opened, we found no man within.*

24 *Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.*

25 *Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.*

26 *Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence : for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.*

27 *And when they had brought them, they set them before the council : and the high priest asked them,*

* Or, envy.

28 *Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name ? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.*

29 *Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.*

30 *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.*

31 *Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*

32 *And we are his witnesses of these things ; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

33 *When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.*

34 *Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space ;*

35 *And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.*

36 *For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody ; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves : who was slain ; and all, as many as *obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.*

37 *After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him : he also perished ; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.*

38 *And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone : for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought :*

39 *But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it ; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.*

40 *And to him they agreed : and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.*

41 *And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*

42 *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*

** Or, believed.*

THE fame of the Apostles' miracles travelled abroad and, to the indignation of the rulers, the people of the neighbouring towns kept trooping into Jerusalem with their sick. It was naturally the Chief Priest, the head of the Sadducean party, that took action, since the offence of the Apostles was that they were still "teaching in this Name" (ver. 28; cf. iv. 18) and thus demonstrating the fact of the Resurrection. And so incensed were they and so resolute to put down the heresy that they arrested all the Twelve and not merely detained them in the keeping of the Temple-guards (cf. iv. 3) pending the meeting of the Sanhedrin next morning but "put them in the common prison."

Their severity proved their own undoing. For see what happened. Since the word for "angel" alike in Greek and in Hebrew signified "messenger," being so rendered in our Version in not a few instances (cf. Mal. iii. 1; 2 Cor. xii. 7), it is here, as elsewhere, an open question what manner of "angel of the Lord" it was that opened the prison doors (see exposition of Mt. i. 20), whether a heavenly or a human minister of His purpose. It is very possible that he was none other than the gaoler. Like so many others in the city he was well-disposed to the Apostles, and he served them as the Highland turnkey of the Glasgow tolbooth served Rob Roy, unlocking the door of their cell in the night and letting them go free. Naturally his connivance would be kept secret; and St. Luke's ambiguous designation of him as (not "the" but) "an angel of the Lord" is a satire upon the Sadducees, forasmuch as they "said that there was no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit" (cf. xxiii. 8). Thus their severity proved their own undoing; for had the prisoners been entrusted to the keeping of the Temple-guards, they would hardly have found among those minions of the priests a well-wisher to befriend them.

"Early in the morning," literally "toward daybreak," which was not only the earliest hour when the court might assemble (see exposition of Mt. xxvi. 57) but the hour of morning prayer, "the Council" assembled. In the original it is "the Sanhedrin," and this its Jewish designation the Gentile Evangelist defines as "the Seigniory of the children of Israel."

See how vividly the scene is portrayed. The officers of the court, sent to fetch the prisoners, returned with the disquieting report that they had found (not "the prison" but) "the cell locked" but tenantless; and hard after them came one of the Temple-guard and announced that so far from having taken flight they were boldly standing in the Temple-court, at the very door of "the Hall of Hewn Stone" (see exposition of Mt. xxvi. 1-5), and teaching the people, the worshippers assembled for morning prayer. A high-handed arrest would have raised a commotion, and so the Captain of the Temple (cf. iv. 1) repaired with the officers to the scene and quietly conducted them before the tribunal.

The Chief Priest Caiaphas as President opened the proceedings; and it is an evidence of the uneasiness of himself and his colleagues that his "interrogation" concerned neither their heresy nor their breaking out of bounds but merely their disregard of the injunction laid on Peter and John (cf. iv. 18) to refrain from teaching in the name of Jesus and charging the rulers with the guilt of His blood. He was met with a stout reiteration of their determination to "obey God rather than men" (cf. iv. 19); and this infuriated the Sanhedrin. It is written not that "they took counsel," implying cool deliberation, but that "they wished to slay them." In the heat of their anger they would have doomed them to death but for a timely remonstrance which saved the Sanhedrin from a crime and the Church from a disaster. It was urged from the side of the Pharisees by one who enjoyed universal esteem—the Rabbi Gamaliel, ever memorable as the teacher of Saul of Tarsus (cf. xxii. 3). A grandson of the gentle Hillel, who is credited with this among other characteristic precepts: "Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving the creatures and bringing them nigh under the Law," Gamaliel inherited his kinsmen's spirit. He was "had" not merely "in reputation" but "in honour among all the people," inasmuch that he was one of four Doctors of the Law who were accorded that supremely honourable title "Rabboni" (see exposition of Mk. x. 51); and on his decease it was said that "the glory of the Law was gone, and wisdom and temperance had died."

He now rose in his place and, requesting the withdrawal of the prisoners, unfolded his counsel. It was a plea for toleration; and he enforced it by two historic examples. (1) The insurrection of Theudas, which had occurred just a generation ago in the troublous days preceding and following the death of Herod the Great in 4 B.C., when, says Josephus, Judæa was afflicted with "ten thousand tumults." The Jewish historian records an insurrection under Theudas during the procuratorship of Cuspius Fadus (44-46 A.D.); and on the assumption that the same incident is intended it was assumed by the older interpreters that Josephus had erred regarding the date, whereas recent critics ascribe the error to St. Luke, charging him with the glaring anachronism of putting on Gamaliel's lips a reference to an event which occurred a dozen years later. In fact there is no reason for impugning the veracity of either, since Theudas, as the Egyptian papyri show, was a frequent name among the Jews of that period; and it may well be that the Theudas of Josephus was a son or grandson of St. Luke's Theudas and had inherited not merely his name but his revolutionary spirit. (2) The insurrection of Judas the Galilean on the occasion of the second imperial census in the year 6 A.D. (see exposition of Lk. ii. 2).

On these two precedents Gamaliel based his plea for toleration, admonishing the Sanhedrin of the futility of persecution as nothing else than, in the phrase of St. Hilary of Poitiers, "an irreligious solicitude for God." Nor is it merely futile: it defeats itself by furthering the error which it would suppress. "Wherefore," argued the historian of imperial Rome, "one is the more disposed to laugh at their stupidity who think by present power to extinguish also the memory of the ensuing generation. On the contrary, the penalising of ideas feeds the flame of their influence; nor have persecutors procured aught else than disgrace for themselves and glory for their victims." It is ever thus, and history abounds with impressive examples. "The religious opinions of sectaries," wrote Scott over a century and a quarter ago, "have a tendency, like the water of some springs, to become soft and mild, when freely exposed to the open day. Who can recognise, in our decent and industrious

Quakers, and Anabaptists, the wild and ferocious tenets which distinguished those sects, while they were yet honoured with the distinction of the scourge and the pillory? Had the system of coercion against the Presbyterians been continued until our day, Blair and Robertson would have preached in the wilderness, and only discovered their powers of eloquence and composition by rolling along a deeper torrent of gloomy fanaticism."

SERVING TABLES

vi. 1-6

1 *And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.*

2 *Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.*

3 *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.*

4 *But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*

5 *And the saying pleased the whole multitude : and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch :*

6 *Whom they set before the apostles : and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.*

THAT genius for trading which has always distinguished the Jewish race had small scope in a little country, sorely impoverished in those later days by heathen oppression ; and for generations its adventurous sons had sought the opportunity denied them at home by migrating to other lands, where they prospered abundantly. They had, says the Greek geographer Strabo, "invaded every city, and it was not easy to find a place in the world which had not received that race and was not mastered by it." Beyond the Euphrates, says Josephus, there were "infinite myriads" of Jews, so many that "their number could not be ascertained." And St. Luke adds his testimony

when he tells (ii. 9-11) how all the countries environing the Mediterranean had representatives among the worshippers who thronged the court of the Temple on the ever memorable Day of Pentecost.

For, wheresoever they settled, those exiles remained true to their fathers' faith. They built them synagogues in the cities of their adoption, and still accounted Jerusalem their "mother-city," paying their annual tribute to the Temple (see exposition of Mt. xvii. 24) and making pilgrimages thither to attend the Feasts. And it was ever the dream of their hearts that they might yet return and spend the evening of their days in the dear homeland and be laid to rest in her sacred soil.

In all my wand'rings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
I still had hopes, my long vexations passed,
Here to return—and die at home at last.

But alas! the attainment of their desire was generally a chill disillusionment. They found themselves as strangers in a strange land, especially at Jerusalem. Proud of their unblemished lineage untainted by heathen defilement, the citizens called themselves "the Hebrews," that hallowed title bestowed of old on their father Abraham when, at the call of God, he forsook his home at Ur of the Chaldees and, as the name signifies, "crossed over" the Euphrates in quest of "a place which he should after receive for an inheritance" (cf. Gen. xiv. 13). And their brethren who dwelt abroad they stigmatised as "Grecians" or, as it is in the original, "Hellenists," likening them to those Jews who during the Maccabean struggle had basely "hellenised," abjuring their faith in base submission to the Greek tyrant. It was indeed a cruel calumny, since nowhere was patriotism more fervent or faith more pure than among "the dispersed of Israel"; and St. Paul indignantly repudiated it when he protested that, though born and bred at Tarsus in Cilicia, he was yet "a Hebrew," "a Hebrew of the Hebrews" (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 22; Phil. iii. 5).

It is thus no surprise that "in these days there arose a murmuring of the Hellenists against the Hebrews." Their

grievance was that "their widows"—lone womenfolk who had returned to the homeland—"were being overlooked in the daily ministration," which means not merely the distribution of the common good as each had need (cf. iv. 35) but the service of the common tables (cf. ver. 2). For after the manner of the Essenes, those holy anchorets of the Wilderness of En-Gedi, the believers in Jerusalem "had all things common," even their tables; and their meals were styled "feasts of charity" or "Love Feasts" (cf. Jude 12; 2 Pet. ii. 13 R.V.). And the result was a fresh condemnation of that luckless experiment in social reorganisation (cf. exposition of v. 1-11). Already the common meals were disgraced by the scandal which St. Paul had occasion afterwards to deplore and censure (cf. 1 Cor. xi. 20-22). The Hellenist widows fared ill in the greedy scramble; and it accentuated the grievance that the Hellenists, such as Barnabas (cf. iv. 36, 37), had been the wealthiest of the community, and it was mainly their generosity that had provided the common store.

It was an intolerable situation. "As in civil business," says Bacon, "if there be a meeting, and men fall at words, there is commonly an end of the matter for the time, and no proceeding at all; so in learning, where there is much controversy, there is many times little inquiry." Nowhere, however, is strife so ruinous as in religion; and it aggravated the mischief that the administration of the common store was in the hands of the Apostles (cf. iv. 37). It was on them that the odium fell, and for the sake of their ministry they must needs right the wrong.

And what remedy was there? It would have been well had they gone to the root of the trouble by recognising the impracticability of their communal organisation and boldly abandoning the disastrous innovation. Its full disastrousness had yet to be discovered; but already, though they could not foresee the material ruin which it would involve, they had a foretaste of the shame which it was bringing upon the Church and which by and by exposed her to the mockery of her enemies both Jewish and pagan by attracting into her membership greedy and worthless idlers that, as the Emperor Julian the

Apostate malignantly remarked, they might participate in the daily ministration.

It would have been well had they abandoned the innovation; but it is always difficult to retrace a wrong step, and mindful, perhaps, of the example of Moses (cf. Num. xi. 16, 17) when the people murmured in the wilderness because they had no flesh to eat, they relieved the immediate embarrassment by the appointment of a board of seven administrators. Their business was to "serve the tables"; whence the office now instituted, which in normal times was concentrated especially with the care of the poor, was designated "the deaconship," literally "service." It was a secular office, and therefore it required "wisdom," particularly for the handling of disputes (cf. 1 Cor. vi. 5). But since all the Church's business is sacred, it was primarily needful that the deacons should be "men of honest report," literally "attested," and "full of the Holy Spirit."

The primitive Church was a democracy, and it was "the whole multitude," thus instructed, that "chose" the Seven; and thereafter the Apostles consecrated them to their office by prayer and the laying on of hands—an ancient ritual of benediction and dedication (cf. Gen. xlviii. 17, 18; Ex. xxix. 10, 15), recalling withal how the Lord in the days of His flesh would lay His kind hands on sick folk and little children (cf. Mt. ix. 18; Mk. x. 16; Lk. iv. 40, xiii. 13). Probably three of the Seven were Hebrews and three Hellenists; while the seventh, Nicolas, represented the proselytes, a small but by no means negligible section of the Church—Gentiles who had been converted to the Jewish faith and then had received the Gospel.

EVANGELISATION OF JUDÆA
AND SAMARIA

vi. 7-ix. 31

ARRAIGNMENT OF STEPHEN

vi. 7-15

7 *And the word of God increased ; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly ; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.*

8 *And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.*

9 *Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.*

10 *And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.*

11 *Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.*

12 *And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,*

13 *And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law :*

14 *For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the *customs which Moses delivered us.*

15 *And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.*

IT is surprising to read that "a great company" or rather "multitude of the priests were obedient to the faith." For the priests were generally if not, in Jerusalem at all events, exclusively Sadducees ; and it nowhere appears that the Gospel gained a single recruit from that worldly sect. Certain authorities, few but weighty, have here "a great multitude

* Or, *rites*.

of the Judæans," the people of Judæa (see exposition of ii. 13, 14); and this is surely the authentic reading. See what it means. Jerusalem was the scene of the Apostles' ministry; and there "the number of the disciples was being multiplied exceedingly," insomuch that, as St. Luke has already mentioned (v. 16), the tidings had spread to the neighbouring cities. It was indeed a mighty triumph in so brief a space, little more, as appears in the sequel, than three years; and the danger was that the Apostles might be content to prosecute their ministry in Jerusalem and her environs, forgetful of their Lord's charge that they should be His witnesses far beyond, "in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (cf. i. 8). "If," says Richard Baxter, "we neglect our work, God hath a spur to quicken us"; and a sharp persecution was the spur which quickened the Church and drove her forth on her worldwide mission. See how it came about.

It was an aphorism of the Greek sage Solon that "office shows a man"; and so it proved with Stephen. He had been elected to the diaconship because he was "a man full" not only "of wisdom" but "of faith and the Holy Spirit"; and in the discharge of his menial office he showed himself "full" not merely "of faith" but, according to the authentic text (ver. 8), "of grace and power." Only a deacon, he exercised a truly apostolic ministry. It evinces how strained were the relations between the Hebrews and the Hellenists that the latter had synagogues of their own at Jerusalem; and here, on the most reasonable construction of an unfinished passage (see Introduction), two of these, doubtless the most important, are mentioned: (1) the synagogue of the Libyans (for which "Liber-tines" is a mere slip of the unrevised text), the Cyrenians, and the Alexandrians—the Hellenists of North Africa; and (2) that of "them of Cilicia and Asia"—those adjacent Provinces of Asia Minor. It was natural that such as were neighbours abroad should thus make common cause at Jerusalem. As yet the believers had not been excluded from fellowship with their unbelieving brethren, and they were free to frequent the synagogues and testify to the Lord's Resurrection and prove from the Scriptures that He was the Messiah. Here, like St. Paul in

after days, Stephen found his opportunity. From the subsequent course of events it appears that it was now the season of Pass-over in the spring of the year 33 when the Hellenist synagogues were crowded with worshippers who had come up to the Feast ; and, himself a Hellenist, he attended and reasoned on the great question. Unable to refute his arguments, his chagrined opponents raised the cry of heresy, and arraigned him before the Sanhedrin on the capital charge of blasphemy, forasmuch as he had declared (1) that " Jesus, this Nazarene, would destroy this Place "—the Temple (cf. Jo. xi. 48), and (2) that He would "change the customs which Moses had delivered."

HIS DEFENCE

vii. 1-50

1 *Then said the high priest, Are these things so ?*

2 *And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken ; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran.*

3 *And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.*

4 *Then came he out of the land of the Chaldæans, and dwelt in Charran : and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.*

5 *And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on : yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.*

6 *And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land ; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years.*

7 *And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God : and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.*

8 *And he gave him the covenant of circumcision : and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day ; and Isaac begat Jacob ; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.*

9 *And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt : but God was with him,*

10 *And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt ; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.*

11 *Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction : and our fathers found no sustenance.*

12 *But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.*

13 *And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren ; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.*

14 *Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.*

15 *So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers,*

16 *And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.*

17 *But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,*

18 *Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.*

19 *The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.*

20 *In which time Moses was born, and was*exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months :*

21 *And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.*

22 *And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.*

23 *And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.*

24 *And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian :*

25 *For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them : but they understood not.*

26 *And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another ?*

27 *But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us ?*

28 *Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday ?*

29 *Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.*

* Or, fair to God.

30 *And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.*

31 *When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight : and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him,*

32 *Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.*

33 *Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet : for the place where thou standest is holy ground.*

34 *I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.*

35 *This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge ? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.*

36 *He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.*

37 *This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, *like unto me ; him shall ye hear.*

38 *This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers : who received the lively oracles to give unto us :*

39 *To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,*

40 *Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us : for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.*

41 *And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.*

42 *Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven ; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness ?*

* Or, as myself.

43 *Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them : and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.*

44 *Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, *speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.*

45 *Which also our fathers †that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David ;*

46 *Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.*

47 *But Solomon built him an house.*

48 *Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands ; as saith the prophet,*

49 *Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool : what house will ye build me ? saith the Lord : or what is the place of my rest ?*

50 *Hath not my hand made all these things ?*

STEPHEN'S defence was a masterly argument, dealing in a manner congenial to a Jewish audience with the first count in the charge of blasphemy—his alleged statement that Jesus would destroy the Temple ; and this he at once defines and vindicates by a historical resume, demonstrating how secondary had been the importance of the Temple in God's dealings with Israel of old and in the development of the national faith. And it is very significant, evincing that, like so many of the Hellenists, he was not merely a loyal but a learned son of Israel, steeped in her sacred lore and versed in the teaching of her schools, that he repeatedly supplements the sacred record from the rich store of tradition or employs for the elucidation of its obscurities the judgments of its later interpreters.

He begins with the Call of Abraham (vers. 1-8). And here at the outset he displays his critical erudition. The ancient chronicle is perplexing. There it is written (Gen. xi. 31-xii. 5) that it was at Haran (the Latin *Charræ*) after he and his father Terah had left his native Ur of the Chaldees in Mesopotamia

* Or, who spake.

† Or, having received.

that Abraham received his call, and that he was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Haran. Terah died at Haran at the age of two hundred and five years; and since he was seventy when he begat Abraham (xi. 26), he must on this reckoning have remained at Haran for a hundred and thirty years after Abraham's departure thence. The incongruity puzzled the Rabbinical interpreters; and one of their theories was that after his settlement at Haran Terah relapsed into idolatry, and it was after this his spiritual death that Abraham departed thence, leaving him behind. By and by, however, the question was better handled by that large-souled Jewish scholar Philo of Alexandria, an elder contemporary of our Lord. Evidently following a Jewish tradition, he represents Abraham as receiving his call not at Haran but at Ur, thus repairing the corruption of the sacred narrative. And this is the account which Stephen gives. "The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran."

Mark the point which he makes here. Though Canaan where Abraham sojourned was the land of promise, he had "none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on." Yet how precious were those years which seemed so barren! See what they brought—the Call, the Covenant, Circumcision the seal thereof, and the birth of Isaac and Jacob and his sons, the twelve Patriarchs. *And all the while there was no Temple.*

Migration to Egypt (vers. 9-16). It might seem a frustration of the Promise when they were driven by famine from the land which would one day be their own. But all the while God was fulfilling His purpose. Not only was their prosperity in Egypt, at that period the world's greatest kingdom, an education for their high destiny but amid its glamour they still remembered the Promise and their hearts still clung to Canaan, inso-much that when they died, they would have their dust carried thither.

According to the ancient scripture (Gen. xxxiii. 19; Josh. xxiv. 32), it was Jacob who bought of the sons of Hamor the parcel of ground at Shechem (Sychem) where his son Joseph was afterwards buried, and he himself was buried beside Abraham and Sarah in the cave of Machpelah (cf. Gen. xlix. 29-33,

l. 12, 13) ; and no otherwise in truth is it written here (ver. 16), if it be recognised that " Abraham " is a scribal interpolation, so that the passage runs : " Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, himself and our fathers ; and they (that is, " our fathers," the twelve patriarchs, Jacob's sons) were carried over to Shechem and laid in the tomb which he bought." And here again Stephen displays his acquaintance with the learning of his day. For, though it is written that by his dying request (cf. Gen. l. 24-26) Joseph was buried at Shechem, nowhere is it told in ancient scripture where his brethren were buried ; but Rabbinical tradition has it that, as Stephen affirms, they too were buried at Shechem, and St. Jerome mentions that the sepulchres of all the twelve Patriarchs were shown there in his day.

See the point of the argument. Though they had no actual inheritance therein, they still, by reason of the promise that it would one day be theirs, clung to Canaan with a love stronger than death. It was a triumph of faith with nothing material or visible to lean upon. *For as yet there was no Temple.*

Affliction in Egypt (vers. 17-29). Here again Stephen dresses the sacred narrative, after the manner of contemporary teachers, with traditional embellishments. (1) It is written merely that Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died (Dt. xxxiv. 7), but tradition had it that his life was divided into three equal periods. For forty years he was a prince in Egypt, for forty an exile in Midian, and for forty more the leader and law-giver of his people (cf. vers. 23, 40). (2) At his birth he was " exceeding fair," literally " fair unto God," a Hebrew phrase (cf. Jon. iii. 3 R.V. marg.) like Tennyson's " divinely fair." So says Stephen, following a tradition which Josephus repeats at length, telling how it was the rare beauty of the child in his ark of bulrushes that charmed the kindly princess, and how it increased with his age, insomuch that, when he was three years old, " everyone who beheld him was astonished at his comeliness, and as he was carried along the road, many would turn to look after him, and quit their employments to gaze at him." (3) His intellect matched his physique. " Moses," says Stephen, " was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians ; and he was

mighty in his words and works." And tradition has it that he was instructed in arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, medicine, and music ; all which he turned to account, "inventing boats and engines of building, instruments of war and hydraulics " for the use of irrigation. Moreover, when Egypt was invaded by the Ethiopians, it was his strategy that repelled them and reduced them to subjection.

Thus in the years of their affliction was God mindful of His people and mindful also of His promise, all the while in His secret providence bringing it to pass. Had they never suffered, they had never been delivered. They would have remained content in Egypt, and Moses would have lived and died a peasant in the land of Goshen. Those bitter years were the making of Israel. *And still she had no Temple.*

The Deliverance (vers. 30-36). It seemed as though the Promise had receded beyond recall when Moses was banished to the wilderness of Midian, remote from Egypt in the south of the Arabian Peninsula, "that wonderful region of the earth, where the grandeur of mountains is combined, as hardly anywhere else, with the grandeur of the desert." There he served for forty years as a hireling flockmaster, eating his heart out at so cruel a mockery, as it seemed, of his generous dream of achieving his people's deliverance (cf. ver. 23). Yet it was there, when like David afterwards (cf. Ps. lxxviii. 70, 71) he had been disciplined by his shepherdcraft to hardihood, endurance, and devotion, that his call came. There is a Rabbinical legend that once, missing a kid from his flock, he sought it far and wide till he found it. "Thou art weary," said he, and carried it home. And God said : "Forasmuch as thou hast compassion for a beast of flesh and blood, thou shalt be the shepherd of Israel My flock."

There in the back of the desert he received his commission and heard the Ineffable Name I AM THAT I AM (Ex. iii. 1-14). And whence came the revelation? From a common bush afire with God, where another might have seen only the red glow of sunset or the blaze of a camp-fire kindled by some roving Bedawin who had passed that way. Not from a Temple ; *for still there was no Temple.*

Apostasy in the Wilderness (vers. 37-44). There Israel received not only "the lively oracles" of the Law but "the Tabernacle of the Testimony." And what a testimony!—the Cloud of Glory overshadowing the Mercy-seat. Yet how little it availed! It was there, while their prophet was absent on the Mount with God, that they relapsed into the idolatry which they had known in Egypt, making them a golden calf, an image of the bull-god Apis, and so opening the flood-gates and letting in the tide of idolatry which polluted the national life for generations to come—the worship of the host of heaven (cf. Dt. iv. 19), as Remphan, the Assyrian name for the planet Saturn, and the gods of the Canaanites, Baal and Moloch. "Was it to Me," protested the Lord by the mouth of an indignant prophet (Am. v. 25-27) in a passage which, though puzzling to interpreters by reason of the corruption of the Hebrew original, aptly serves Stephen's purpose as he quotes it here from the Greek Version—"was it to Me that ye offered victims and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?" They had the Tabernacle of the Testimony now, *yet how little it availed them!*

The Building of the Temple (vers. 45-50). The Tabernacle, a frail tent which they pitched where they encamped and "took up" (ver. 43) when they resumed their march, was but a temporary institution, anticipating the House which they would build for the Lord on gaining the Promised Land. It served the generation which for its unbelief was doomed to die in the wilderness, and "our fathers in succession brought it in with Jesus"—the Greek form of Joshua (cf. Heb. iv. 8); nor was it until some two centuries had elapsed that Solomon was suffered to build his magnificent Temple. So little need of an earthly habitation had the Most High who filleth heaven and earth with the majesty of His glory, "preferring before all temples the upright heart and pure," as Solomon confessed (cf. 1 Ki. viii. 27; 2 Chr. ii. 6, vi. 18) and the prophets after him proclaimed (cf. Is. lxvi. 1).

HIS MARTYRDOM

vii. 51—viii. 3

51 *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost : as your fathers did, so do ye.*

52 *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted ? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One ; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers :*

53 *Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.*

54 *When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.*

55 *But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.*

56 *And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.*

57 *Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,*

58 *And cast him out of the city, and stoned him : and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.*

59 *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*

60 *And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

1 *And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem ; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles.*

2 *And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.*

3 *As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.*

WHEREFORE the abrupt change in Stephen's bearing toward his august audience—hitherto so courteous and persuasive and now flashing into stern denunciation? They had been listening with growing impatience as they perceived whither his argument tended; and when he disclosed the final issue, they raised a clamour of fierce protest, with Oriental abandon gnashing their teeth like savage beasts. The reverend court was transformed into a furious mob. They would hear the heretic no further, nor did they stay to pronounce formal sentence but dealt with him by mob law, dragging him out of the city that it might not be polluted with his blood and wreaking upon him the blasphemer's doom of stoning to death.

It was a daring illegality, since in those days when Judæa belonged to the Province of Syria, the Sanhedrin's power was restricted and a capital sentence must be referred to the Roman Procurator, and if ratified by him was executed according to Roman Law (see exposition of Jo. xviii. 31). Had Stephen been judicially sentenced and his sentence duly approved, he would not have been stoned but crucified. And how came it that the Sanhedrin could with impunity thus take the law into its own hands? It was the year 33, and Pilate's unhappy procuratorship (25–35 A.D.) was drawing to its ignominious close. It was the embarrassment of his evil administration that had constrained him, sorely reluctant, to sanction our Lord's execution (see exposition of Mt. xxvii. 11); and since his difficulties had meanwhile been multiplied, he durst not challenge this open flouting of his authority.

Here first appears that young Rabbi Saul of Tarsus, the hero of the ensuing narrative. Observe how significantly St. Luke introduces him. (1) It was the rule at a stoning that the witnesses at the victim's trial (cf. vi. 12–14) should begin the work; and when they doffed (not their "clothes" but) their "mantles" (see exposition of Mt. v. 40) to allow their arms free play, they "laid them down at the feet of a young man called Saul." He would not demean himself by bearing a part with the brutal rabble, yet something he would do to testify his abhorrence of the heretic. (2) "Saul was consenting unto

his death"—not without misgiving, as the original implies. Was it the sight of the martyr's face, like an angel's (cf. vi. 15) amid his anguish, and his prayer for his murderers that moved him? "If," says St. Augustine, "Stephen had not so prayed, the Church would not have Paul to-day." (3) He stifled his misgiving and hardened his heart. "As for Saul, he made havock of the Church." But "the syllogism of violence" is ever the resort of one conquered by reason, and his very fury betrayed a conscience ill at ease. He was "kicking against the pricks." Those three brief sentences mark the rise and progress of his spiritual conflict and foreshadow the ultimate issue.

MISSION OF PHILIP (viii. 4-40)

I. SIMON THE MAGICIAN

viii. 4-25

4 *Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.*

5 *Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.*

6 *And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.*

7 *For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them : and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.*

8 *And there was great joy in that city.*

9 *But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one :*

10 *To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.*

11 *And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.*

12 *But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*

13 *Then Simon himself believed also : and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the *miracles and signs which were done.*

14 *Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John :*

15 *Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.*

* Gr. signs and great miracles.

16 *(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them : only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)*

17 *Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*

18 *And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,*

19 *Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.*

20 *But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.*

21 *Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter : for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.*

22 *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*

23 *For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.*

24 *Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.*

25 *And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.*

“**W**E are multiplied,” said Tertullian to the oppressors of his day, “as often as we are mown down by you. The blood of Christians is a seed.” And so it proved on the occasion of this the first persecution. The fugitives were missionaries. They not merely “went everywhere” but, as the oft-recurring phrase of the original properly signifies, “made a missionary progress, telling the Gospel—the good tidings—the Word.”

Conspicuously successful was the ministry of Philip, one of the Seven (cf. vi. 5) who in the discharge of his lowly office had, like Stephen, proved his endowment with higher gifts, insomuch that he was afterwards styled not “the Deacon” but “the Evangelist” (cf. xxi. 8). Fleeing northward, he found an asylum in the capital of Samaria, known in those later days, in honour of the Emperor Augustus, as Sebasté, the Latin

Augusta. There, after the example of the Lord's dealings with the despised Samaritans (Jo. iv. 39-42), he "proclaimed unto them" not "Christ" but "the Christ—the Messiah," whom, heretics as they were in Jewish eyes, they expected (cf. Jo. iv. 25), reinforcing his message by gracious miracles. It was these especially that appealed to that notorious personage Simon the Magician, a practitioner of those baleful arts which had so large a vogue in that sad old world where religion was dead and superstition abounded.

Surprising as it may appear, on the dispersal of the Church at Jerusalem the Apostles had still held their ground unmolested (cf. viii. 1). Their security lay in the popular veneration which their miracles had inspired (cf. v. 12-16). Their molestation would have excited a tumult in the city, and after their high-handed dealing with Stephen the rulers would be doubly apprehensive of a collision with the Roman authority. On learning what was transpiring in Samaria they, after their wont on like occasions (cf. xi. 22), deputed two of their number, Peter and John, to visit the scene and direct the novel movement. It was indeed a most needful intervention. For Philip was merely an evangelist, winning men to repentance and faith; and the two great Apostles completed his work by instructing his converts and invoking upon them the grace of the Holy Spirit.

They employed the accustomed symbolism so congenial to the Oriental mind, not merely praying for them but laying their hands upon them (see exposition of vi. 6). The rite, so blessedly attended, appealed to Simon. He construed it as a magical charm and, coveting the secret, waited upon them and proposed to purchase it of them. It was for him a most natural misconception, evincing his ignorance and his sore need of spiritual enlightenment but in no wise discrediting the sincerity of his profession of faith; and one may well marvel at the severity of Peter's retort "Thy money perish with thee!" So our Version has it; but it is literally "Thy silver be with thee for perishing!" and see what this means. The magician had his open purse in his hand ready to pay down the price, and Peter pointed contemptuously to the gleaming shekels. "Keep thy silver," he cried, "that perishing stuff!" It was

not a denunciation of doom but a scornful reprobation of the crude idea which had prompted the offer—the idea that “the gift of God (see exposition of Jo. iv. 10) may be purchased with money.” It proved, in scriptural phrase, that Simon’s heart was not “right with God” (Ps. lxxviii. 37); he was “in the gall of bitterness (cf. Dt. xxix. 18) and the bond of unrighteousness (cf. Is. lviii. 6).” There was in his poor worldly heart “a root of bitterness” (cf. Heb. xii. 15), “bearing gall and wormwood” and not the sweet “fruit of the Spirit” (cf. Gal. v. 22); and he was still in “the bondage of corruption” (cf. Rom. viii. 21), enslaved by “corruptible things, as silver and gold” (cf. 1 Pet. i. 18). It was not a pronouncement of doom but, as the Apostle expressly affirms, a call to repentance and consecration. And Simon humbly hearkened thereto.

2. THE ETHIOPIAN CHAMBERLAIN

viii. 26-40

26 *And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.*

27 *And he arose and went : and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,*

28 *Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.*

29 *Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.*

30 *And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest ?*

31 *And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me ? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.*

32 *The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter ; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth :*

33 *In his humiliation his judgment was taken away : and who shall declare his generation ? for his life is taken from the earth.*

34 *And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this ? of himself, or of some other man ?*

35 *Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.*

36 *And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water : and the eunuch said, See, here is water ; what doth hinder me to be baptized ?*

37 *And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*

38 *And he commanded the chariot to stand still : and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch ; and he baptized him.*

39 *And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more : and he went on his way rejoicing.*

40 *But Philip was found at Azotus : and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.*

WHEN Philip's work in Samaria was accomplished, the question arose whither he should betake himself ; and when it is written that (not "the" but) "an angel of the Lord" directed him southward, the meaning in Jewish parlance is simply that he was determined by the godly consideration that there he would find the best opportunity for the further prosecution of his mission. He first betook himself westward to the ancient country of the Philistines, and then travelled southward by the highway leading to Egypt and onward to Ethiopia, the land of "the Swart-faces," as the name signifies, "the remotest of men," as Homer had styled them, dwelling afar by the Cataracts of the Nile. Observe that it was not "the way" that St. Luke meant when he wrote parenthetically "which" or rather "this is desert." For the way was a busy trade-route, and the country which it traversed was fertile and populous. It was Gaza that was desert. Over a century ago the ancient city, situated some twenty furlongs inland, had been devastated, and the new city was built on the coast, that it might enjoy the commercial advantages of a seaport. The old city was now a tumble of ruins, and there lay the scene of this memorable meeting.

This traveller was not only a heathen but one who would naturally have small regard for so poor a people as the Jews. For he was minister of finance at the court of Ethiopia, where the government was a gynocracy and the reigning queen was styled "Candacé"—a title not a name—as the king of Egypt was styled "Pharaoh" and the Roman Emperor "Cæsar." How was it, then, that he "had come to Jerusalem for to worship" ?

He belonged to that peculiarly interesting order which had arisen of late and, as will appear in the ensuing narrative, played no small part in the establishment of Christianity—"the God-fearers," earnest Gentiles, generally of the higher class, who, dissatisfied with the outworn creeds of paganism, were attracted by the Jewish faith and, while eschewing its ceremonial, participated with generous devotion in the worship of Temple and Synagogue (see exposition of Mt. viii. 5-10; Jo. xii. 20). If it was the season of Passover when Stephen was arraigned, it would now be the season of Pentecost, and the Ethiopian had been attending that Feast and was returning full of wonderment at the doings which he had witnessed at Jerusalem and the questions which were agitating the minds of the people.

It was customary, as the Younger Pliny shows, for an eminent personage when making a journey to be attended by his secretary, who sat beside him in his chariot, writing at his dictation or reading to him aloud; and so was the Ethiopian now employed. His secretary was reading from the Greek version of the Septuagint the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, that moving prophecy which, figuring largely in the discussions at Jerusalem in those days, had engaged the Ethiopian's attention; and as the leisurely chariot passed him, Philip caught the familiar words and recognised his opportunity. See what was puzzling the Ethiopian: "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself or of some other?"—the very question which interpreters have constantly debated. And "from this scripture" Philip not merely "preached unto him Jesus" but "told him the good tidings of Jesus"—"the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The Ethiopian had long been a seeker after God and he had heard in Jerusalem of the Saviour's fulfilment of the ancient promise; and it is no marvel that the Evangelist's message went home to his heart, and he not only confessed his faith but when the chariot reached a wayside stream, craved the sacramental seal. Philip consented without a moment's demur; for that requirement of a formal declaration of faith (ver. 37) is, on the evidence of the original manuscripts, a homiletic amplification of the text. No declaration

was needed. The Ethiopian's desire proved his fitness. "All the fitness He requireth is—to feel your need of Him."

And there is nothing supernatural in the sequel. For a while, like our Lord after His baptism in the Jordan (cf. Lk. iii. 21), the convert would stand with bowed head, oblivious of his surroundings; and when he looked up, Philip was gone. It was indeed the Spirit of the Lord that "caught him away"; for now that he had done his part, a gracious instinct admonished him that it were well for the Ethiopian to be alone with his Saviour. Therefore he quietly withdrew, betaking himself to Azotus (Ashdod) some twenty miles northward and thence "making a missionary progress" (cf. viii. 4) as far as Cæsarea.

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL

ix. I—I9a

1 *And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,*

2 *And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any* of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.*

3 *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus : and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven :*

4 *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?*

5 *And he said, Who art thou, Lord ? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest : it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

6 *And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*

7 *And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.*

8 *And Saul arose from the earth ; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man : but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.*

9 *And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.*

10 *And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias ; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.*

11 *And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus : for, behold, he prayeth,*

* Gr. of the way.

12 *And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.*

13 *Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem :*

14 *And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.*

15 *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way : for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel :*

16 *For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*

17 *And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house ; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.*

18 *And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales : and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.*

19a *And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.*

IS conversion or any other spiritual experience ever really sudden? "When," wrote the saintly McLeod Campbell, "the simple and clear result is presented to others, they little conceive of the path by which the Spirit has brought the teacher, and by what darkness he was prepared for the light in which he now rejoices, and to which he invites them. Oh little do they know who talk of youth and inexperience, how far they are from the mark when they speak of that as a *first* thought and a *first* love which has had ten thousand thoughts and feelings before it ; and little do they conceive of the mass of experience which, in a mind bent to one subject, may be crowded into a very brief period of time." So it was with Saul. It was a long journey of about a hundred and fifty miles, from Jerusalem to Damascus, and he travelled with no other company than the officers whom the Sanhedrin provided to escort him and arrest his intended victims, and not, after the mediæval fancy, like a knight errant on a mailed charger but a-foot, since had there been a beast to carry him, he would not have needed, when

stricken blind, to be led by the hand into Damascus. Thus in the course of the long march of about a week he had leisure for reflection; and the misgiving which had assailed him as he witnessed Stephen's martyrdom and which had been for the time silenced amid the frenzy of his persecuting zeal, reasserted itself ever more imperiously.

In good truth his whole past had been a preparation for the hour of decision. For he had been a Pharisee of the nobler sort, knowing "the plague of his own heart" and seeking to attain peace with God, after the Pharisaic method, by his own works of righteousness and finding, as he confesses in his epistles, how futile that way was. He had known no other until he encountered the believers; and when he heard their testimony and saw how their faith in the Risen Lord emboldened them to suffer and die, he would be more and more persuaded that they had found the true way.

The crisis came as he neared Damascus. There lay the scene of his intended inquisition. Could he persist? In view of the spiritual affinity of those two great souls it is not a little remarkable that even as it was a thunderstorm that arrested Martin Luther on the road to Erfurt, so was it now with Saul. For where it is written that "suddenly there shone round about him a light from heaven," the original expressly signifies that it was a blaze of lightning—a frequent occurrence in that region when the hot blast from the desert meets the chill breath of the snow-capped range of Anti-Lebanon. It blinded Saul, and he fell prostrate.

And what ensued? So momentous was the experience that the story is told thrice: here by St. Luke as he had heard it from the lips of his revered master, and twice again by the latter himself—in his address to the mob at Jerusalem from the stair of the Castle (xxii. 6–11) and in his defence at Cæsarea before King Agrippa (xxvi. 12–18). And it is well that the story is thus reiterated; for what do we find on comparing the versions? A seeming disagreement which in truth is none but rather an undesigned elucidation of the sacred mystery. It is written here that Saul's companions "stood speechless, hearing (not "a" but) the voice, but seeing no man"; whereas in his address

from the Castle-stair the Apostle says that they " beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me." The voice which they heard was their stricken leader's, when he asked " Who art Thou, Lord ? " This they heard, but not the voice which had challenged him " Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me ? " And the reason is that his vision on the road to Damascus was, as he afterwards affirmed (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 3-8), a manifestation of the Risen Lord, no other than those vouchsafed to His chosen witnesses in the course of the forty days betwixt His Resurrection and His Ascension (cf. exposition of Lk. xxiv. 13-32 and Vol. III. pp. 327-30) ; and what had happened then happened now. The veil of sense was lifted, and Saul saw what the natural eye could not see and heard what the natural ear could not hear ; while his companions saw only the flash of lightning and their leader prostrate on the ground, and heard only his question. They neither saw the Heavenly Visitant nor heard His voice, and they wondered at what seemed to them a one-sided colloquy.

The colloquy reported in our text is abbreviated in our oldest manuscripts, which read merely (vers. 5, 6) : " I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise, and go into the city." But, though unwritten here, nevertheless on the Apostle's own testimony (cf. xxvi. 14) the addition is authentic, and it illumines the story. Observe the tenderness and withal the severity of the Lord. In the original He calls the stricken persecutor by his Hebrew name, so kindly in Jewish ears (see exposition of Jo. xx. 16)—not " Saul, Saul ! " but " Shaûl, Shaûl ! " And what of that compassionate remonstrance " It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks " ? It was a homely proverb of a restive beast of burden lashing out with its heels and vainly wounding itself on the spiked bar of the waggon. And how aptly it defines Saul's condition of late—conscience-stricken yet fighting against conviction ! It showed him that he had to do with One who knew the secrets of his troubled soul. " What," he falters, " wilt Thou have me to do ? " and the question betrays his intention. He would fain have turned his back upon Damascus and sought retirement ; and the last course he would have chosen was to enter the city and show himself there, broken and humbled

where he had thought to appear in the pride of authority. Yet that was the Lord's requirement. He must drink the cup of shame to the dregs. And all was ready for him. He had bespoken a lodging at the house of a Jew named Judas in "the street called Straight," the High Street, which still traverses the city as Maundrell saw it in the year 1697. "It is about half a mile in length, running from East to West thro' the City. It being narrow and the Houses jutting out in several places on both sides, you cannot have a clear prospect of it's length, and straightness. In this Street is shewn the House of Judas, with whom St. Paul Lodged, and in the same House is an old Tomb, said to be Ananias's : but how he should come to be buried here, they could not tell us, nor could we guess ; his own House being shewn us in another place." And even as the persecutor had engaged a lodging against his coming, so had the Lord prepared for him a welcome into the household of faith by manifesting Himself to Ananias, a Jewish believer—not a refugee, since he knew of the persecution only by report (cf. ver. 13), but a resident in Damascus, who forasmuch as he remained loyal to the ancient ordinances, was well regarded by the Jewish community (cf. xxii. 12), and so well qualified to commend the stricken persecutor and win a hearing for his testimony.

Observe that detail, so characteristic of St. Luke : "there fell from his eyes as it had been scales." The Greek word for "scales," occurring only here in the New Testament, was a medical term ; and even as the physician Hippocrates uses it of the scab which forms after cauterisation, so the Beloved Physician uses it of the hardened rheum which had exuded from Saul's eyes when they were blasted by the lightning. It had sealed his eyelids, and now at his healing it drops off in flakes.

HIS TESTIMONY

ix. 19b-31

19b *Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.*

20 *And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.*

21 *But all that heard him were amazed, and said ; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests ?*

22 *But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.*

23 *And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him :*

24 *But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.*

25 *Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.*

26 *And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples : but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.*

27 *But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.*

28 *And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.*

29 *And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians ; but they went about to slay him.*

30 *Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.*

31 *Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified ; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.*

SSAUL'S first duty was the confession of his new-found faith to his fellow Jews. Nor did he lack opportunity, since it was the fashion of the Synagogue that a qualified stranger should be invited to address the worshippers (cf. xiii. 15 and exposition of Mt. iv. 23-25). They would be eager to learn the reason of so startling a *volte-face*. Damascus was a great city; and since its teeming population included from ten to fifteen thousand Jews, it had numerous synagogues, and he visited them all, delivering the same testimony in each. See what this was. It is written, not that "he preached Christ, that He is the Son of God," that is, the King of Israel, the Promised Deliverer (see exposition of Mt. iii. 17), but that "he proclaimed Jesus, that the Son of God is this man"; and the significance hereof is presently defined when it is written that he "proved"—"proved," as the original implies, "by collation of scriptural evidences"—"that the Christ (Messiah) is this man." That is to say, he would adduce prophetic foreshadowings of the Coming Saviour, and then, pointing to Jesus, exhibit their realisation in Him.

His ministry at Damascus continued "many days" (ver. 23)—a vague phrase which in one passage (1 Ki. i. 38, 39) denotes no less than three years. And precisely this is the space which it covers here. So he affirms in his epistle to the Galatians (i. 17, 18), where he intimates that after an initial declaration he retired for a season to Arabia, that there in the hallowed solitude of Mount Sinai he might think out what had befallen him; and then, with a clear vision of the issues, he returned to Damascus and resumed his argument.

It fared with him as with Stephen at Jerusalem. His powerful reasoning largely prevailed, but his opponents, exasperated by his success, plotted his destruction and he would have fallen a victim but for the vigilance of (not "the" but) "his disciples," the converts whom he had won. The city-gates were closely watched, and his escape was a romantic adventure like that of Hugo Grotius from the Castle of Lœvenstein in his empty book-chest. They ensconced him in "a hamper" (see exposition of Mt. xv. 37) and under cover of night let him down not "over the wall" but "through the wall" or, as he put it in

telling the story (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 33), "through a window through the wall." "As," says an explorer, "we looked down the walls, in which we recognized pieces of the Roman period, we saw houses on the ramparts, and windows overhanging the ditch. From such a place was Paul let down on the night of his memorable escape from Damascus."

And whither did he now betake himself? It was not enough that he had testified at Damascus. Jerusalem had been the scene of his "exceeding madness" (xxii. 11), and there especially must he confess the Lord. It was no light task. The persecution which he had led was indeed ended, but in the eyes of the rulers he was a renegade, and they were bitter against him. And whatever reports may have reached them of his doings at Damascus, the believers in Jerusalem with their still smarting wounds must needs view him with suspicion. So it proved. He would have been denied access to the Church but for Barnabas, a generous soul who, with no brilliant parts of his own, was ever quick to recognise the merit of others and lend them his aid, making himself of no reputation. He stood surety for the penitent, and commended him to the Church's grace.

Thus Saul obtained a hearing. His ministry at Jerusalem lasted but a fortnight (cf. Gal. i. 18). Himself a Hellenist (see exposition of vi. 1), his especial arena was the Hellenist synagogues where Stephen had argued so brilliantly (cf. vi. 8-10); and he would have shared Stephen's fate had not the brethren, no longer distrustful, conveyed him to Cæsarea, the Roman capital of the Province, where he was secure from Jewish molestation. Thence he betook himself to his home at Tarsus in Cilicia, where he remained for nine years (cf. Gal. i. 21-24), employing himself, as his epistles reveal, in preaching and fruitful meditation and thus all unconsciously preparing himself for his great life-work.

EVANGELISATION OF HEATHENDOM

ix. 32-xxi. 14

A MISSION OF PETER (ix. 32-xi. 18)

I. AT LYDDA AND JOPPA

ix. 32-43

32 *And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.*

33 *And there he found a certain man named Æneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.*

34 *And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole : arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.*

35 *And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.*

36 *Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called *Dorcas : this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.*

37 *And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died : whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.*

38 *And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not †delay to come to them.*

39 *Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber : and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.*

40 *But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down and prayed ; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes : and when she saw Peter she sat up.*

41 *And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.*

* Or, Doe, or, Roe.

† Or, be grieved.

42 *And it was known throughout all Joppa ; and many believed in the Lord.*

43 *And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.*

IT was not a mission to the heathen that Peter undertook when he now left Jerusalem, hitherto the scene of the Apostles' ministry. It was a mission of encouragement to the Christian communities which had arisen outside the city in Judæa and Galilee and—mainly through the instrumentality of Philip the Evangelist (cf. viii. 1-25)—Samaria. And so it is written, not merely that he “passed through all quarters,” but that he “made a missionary progress through them all,” and it was with “the saints”—a primitive designation of the believers endued, as they were, with sanctifying grace—that he took to do. But the Lord had a larger end in view, and it is now shown how in the prosecution of his own narrower design Peter was led to overpass the racial barrier and proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles.

His first station was the Judæan town of Lydda some five and twenty miles north-west of Jerusalem ; and there he healed the paralytic Æneas. Not only did the miracle stir Lydda but the fame of it, spreading all over the fair Plain of Sharon, reached the ancient Philistian seaport of Joppa (now *Jaffa*), the next station on his route, and awakened an eager expectation of his arrival. But he “delayed” his departure thither, nor is the reason obscure. Though a heathen city, Joppa was largely peopled by Jews, embued with a double portion of Jewish animosity—the unhappy legacy of a heroic past. About the year 141 B.C. Simon Maccabæus “amid all his glory took Joppa for a haven, and made it an entrance for the isles of the sea” (1 Macc. xiv. 5). It was the only seaport Israel had ever possessed, and the conqueror's dream was not merely that it would extend the nation's commerce but that, purged of idolatry, it would serve as a gateway for the passage of her Faith to the western world. And it was natural that in after days, when the bright vision had faded, the descendants of the Maccabæan settlers should be bitter against their heathen neighbours.

Where such a spirit prevailed there was little likelihood that the Gospel would be kindly received ; and though there was already a Christian community in the city, the Apostle, weary of controversy, " delayed " or, as the original rather signifies, " hesitated " to go thither until he received an urgent entreaty. The church and indeed the whole city of Joppa had sustained a heavy loss by the death of a Christian lady. Her Jewish name was Tabitha, meaning " Gazelle " or in Greek Dorcas. She went as Dorcas among her Gentile neighbours ; nor is it without significance that her double designation is thus carefully mentioned. It is a suggestion of the wideness of her charity, embracing Jews and Gentiles alike. Her name was a household word with both. Evidently well-to-do and skilful with distaff and needle, she busied herself in making garments for the poor. Was it, as the poet fancies, that it was that word of the Lord that had moved her ?—" I was naked, and ye clothed Me. Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me."

Home, home she went, and plied the loom,
And Jesus' poor arrayed.
She died—they wept about the room,
And showed the coats she made.

And what of those widows who surrounded the Apostle in the chamber of death, " weeping and displaying the tunics and cloaks (see exposition of Mt. v. 40) which Dorcas made," rather " was making, while she was with them," implying that the garments were unfinished, just as her busy fingers had left them ? They were not merely recipients of her charity, lamenting their benefactress. It was a Jewish ordinance, maintained by the Apostolic Church, that each community should support its destitute widows, and that these should make requital by prayers and kindly ministration to strangers, orphans, and the sick (cf. 1 Tim. v. 3-16). Every synagogue had its widowed sisterhood, and the sisterhood at Joppa had aided Tabitha, probably herself a widow, in her good works and almsdeeds.

The restoration of one so universally beloved commended the Apostle to the people of Joppa and opened their hearts to his

message, insomuch that in a city which he had hesitated to visit, he engaged for "many days," probably several months (see exposition of ver. 23), in a fruitful ministry. All the while he "abode with one Simon a tanner," not as his tenant but, as the word suggests (cf. xvi. 15, xxi. 8), as his guest—a highly significant circumstance. For tanning, though a lawful, was a dirty trade. "The world," it was said, "cannot exist without perfumers and tanners. Well for thee if thou be a perfumer : woe to thee if thou be a tanner." If a man turned tanner, his wife was entitled to divorce. And by reason of its offensive odour it was required that a tannery, like a grave or a mixen, should be situated at least fifty cubits beyond a town's wall. Hence Simon's house was "by the seaside" (x. 6). Yet Peter abode with him. And the reason is plain. The tanner, as his name proves, was a Jew, and evidently he was a believer. He had been the first to offer Peter hospitality on his arrival, and in accordance with the Master's injunction (see exposition of Mt. x. 11 and Lk. x. 7) it was graciously accepted.

2. AT CÆSAREA (x-xi. 18)

(1) TWO VISIONS

X. 1-23a

1 *There was a certain man in Cæsarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,*

2 *A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.*

3 *He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.*

4 *And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.*

5 *And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter :*

6 *He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side : he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.*

7 *And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually ;*

8 *And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.*

9 *On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour :*

10 *And he became very hungry, and would have eaten : but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,*

11 *And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth :*

12 *Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.*

13 *And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter ; kill, and eat.*

14 *But Peter said, Not so, Lord ; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.*

15 *And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.*

16 *This was done thrice : and the vessel was received up again into heaven.*

17 *Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,*

18 *And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.*

19 *While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.*

20 *Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing : for I have sent them.*

21 *Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius ; and said, Behold I am he whom you seek : what is the cause wherefore ye are come ?*

22 *And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.*

23a *Then called he them in, and lodged them.*

CÆSAREA was the Roman capital, where the Procurator had his official residence and the Italian Cohort, the imperial regiment serving in the Province, had its headquarters ; and Cornelius, an officer thereof, was, as his name betrays, a scion of an ancient and illustrious Roman family. He was a Gentile, but he was also a " God-fearer " (see exposition of viii. 27), finding in the Faith of Israel something of the satisfaction which his heathen heart craved but hungering still for a fuller peace—the peace which Christ alone could supply.

A seeking soul is ever sure to find ; and it matters little what manner of " angel " it was that visited Cornelius and

counselled him—whether a “ministering spirit” or a human “messenger” or merely a happy thought inspired by tidings which he had heard of the Apostle’s doings at Lydda and Joppa (see exposition of Mt. i. 20). What really matters is that when guidance was vouchsafed to him, he was earnestly seeking it. So is it presently intimated where it is written (ver. 22) that he “was warned from God”—an untranslatable phrase in the original, denoting that he was “doing business” at the Throne of Grace, and the revelation was God’s response (see exposition of Lk. ii. 26).

So was it also with Peter. His vision, as its very strangeness argues, was God’s response to a soul seeking light on a vexing question. And what was the question? Peter was a Jew, habituated to ceremonial restrictions; and in a heathen city he would be embarrassed at every turn by the Jewish distinction between clean and unclean meat. It was this that was in his mind that noontide when, weary with his evangelical labours since early morning, he returned home and repaired to that place of retirement, the flat roof of his house, to spend the sultry hours not merely, after the eastern fashion, in repose but in prayer—prayer for guidance on that troublesome question. See how his surroundings shaped his vision. “He beholdeth a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet.” The word “sheet” was used of a ship’s sail; and as he mused on his house-top “by the seaside,” the ships were passing before him, making for the harbour or putting out to sea, each with her single mast and yard and her great swelling “sheet.” Hard by was Simon’s tannery, replete with hides from the shambles. The flesh of some was unclean in Jewish esteem; yet were they all God’s creatures and, as St. Paul afterwards confessed (1 Tim. iv. 4), “every creature of God is good” (cf. Gen. i. 31). So the vision fashioned itself in Peter’s mind: “a certain vessel, as it were a great sheet (not “knit at” but) let down (cf. ix. 25) by the four corners,” stored with all manner of creatures; and it and they, like the Holy City in the Apocalypse (Rev. xxi. 10), “descended out of heaven, from God.” “Things which God accounted clean, account not thou common” (cf. Mk. vii. 2).

For a moment he wondered what it meant, but just then the messengers of Cornelius presented themselves. And, chiming as it did with his surmisings, the appeal of those Gentile strangers showed him the interpretation of the vision by discovering to him the truth, so subversive of Jewish prejudice, that the children of men of every race and clime are all alike dear to God and precious in His sight. "The Spirit said unto him"—no voice from heaven but his heart's responsive acclaim.

(2) BAPTISM OF CORNELIUS

x. 23b-48

23b *And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.*

24 *And the morrow after they entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.*

25 *And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.*

26 *But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up ; I myself also am a man.*

27 *And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.*

28 *And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation ; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.*

29 *Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for : I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me ?*

30 *And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour ; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,*

31 *And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.*

32 *Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter ; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side : who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.*

33 *Immediately therefore I sent to thee ; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.*

34 *Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons :*

35 *But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.*

36 *The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ : (he is Lord of all :)*

37 *That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached ;*

38 *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power : who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil ; for God was with him.*

39 *And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem ; whom they slew and hanged on a tree :*

40 *Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly ;*

41 *Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.*

42 *And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.*

43 *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*

44 *While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.*

45 *And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

46 *For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,*

47 *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ?*

48 *And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.*

ON reaching Cæsarea with his company—not only the two servants of Cornelius and the “devout” soldier who had escorted them on the long journey (cf. vers. 7, 19), but several of the Christians of Joppa—Peter found an eager

assemblage awaiting him. The good centurion with soldierly courtesy met him at the gateway of his house and "fell at his feet and worshipped him," in the old sense of the word—as Shakespeare has it: "God keep your worship"; "Look upon him, love him; he worships you"—signifying merely reverential obeisance. Though perhaps there was in his reverence somewhat of adoration inspired by the report of the miracle of Joppa, Peter's remonstrance was hardly a rebuke of idolatry. It was rather a kindly reassurance, putting Cornelius at his ease and inviting him to brotherly converse as man with man. And so, when he was presented to the company within doors, the Apostle put them also at their ease by telling how God had reproved his Jewish prejudice and inquiring wherefore he had been summoned.

Cornelius explained by recounting his own vision; and the coincidence brought home to Peter a truth which had already been dawning on his mind—that God cared for all the children of men, and the Gentiles were in no wise, as the Jews conceived, outcasts from His regard. "Of a truth," he cried, "I grasp"—"comprehend" or "apprehend" (Eph. iii. 18)—"that 'God is no respecter of persons' (cf. Dt. x. 17), but in every nation one that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him." It was precisely the truth which the Lord had presented in His dramatic picture of the judgment of heathendom (Mt. xxv. 31-46, where see exposition); and Peter's gladness at the discovery would be mingled with shame that he had been so slow in grasping it.

He forthwith acted upon it by proclaiming to that Gentile congregation of seekers after God the Gospel which they had been blindly groping after; and the emotion which filled his heart is manifest in his broken utterance. Observe how the opening sentence runs: "The word which He (God) sent to the children of Israel, 'telling good tidings of peace' (cf. Is. lii. 7) through Jesus Christ——" Here he breaks off. He had meant to continue: "He sent not to them alone but to all mankind"; but at the blessed name of Jesus Christ he pauses and gives the sentence another and more effective turn: "The word which He sent to the children of Israel, 'telling good tidings

of peace' through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all," not the children of Israel alone but the children of men, Gentiles as well as Jews.

And herewith mastering his emotion, he resumes and recites the story which Cornelius and his friends had heard, though they had never perceived its significance. "Ye know the story which spread all over the Jewish land (cf. i. 8), beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached, even Jesus of Nazareth"—He was Himself the story—"how God anointed Him." Observe the sovereign facts which he recounts: the Lord's anointing for His Messianic ministry which by its gracious miracles approved His divine commission; His crucifixion; His Resurrection and the incontrovertible attestation thereof. And see how carefully this last is defined. The mystery was revealed only to the chosen witnesses who were privileged to behold the Glorified Master, and they simply proclaimed the ineffable fact (cf. exposition of Mt. xxviii). But the popular imagination, after its wont, embellished their testimony with fancies of its own. Among these was the crude notion that, though wearing a spiritual body suited for the Kingdom which flesh and blood cannot inherit (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 50), the Risen Lord had eaten and drunk with His disciples. The notion appears in the popular story which St. Luke has preserved at the close of his Gospel (xxiv. 41), and now he takes opportunity of correcting it. For his statement here, though, as presented in our Version, a repetition of the error, is in truth an emphatic repudiation thereof. Rightly construed, it runs thus: "God gave Him to become manifest—not to all the people but to witnesses who had been chosen afore by God, even us who ate and drank with Him—after He arose from the dead." Observe the force of the parenthesis. It is not an affirmation of the reality of the Lord's Resurrection inasmuch as He still wore a body of flesh and blood; for this, as St. Paul has testified, He did not. It is an attestation of the credibility of the witnesses inasmuch as they had been His daily intimates, eating and drinking with Him, in the days of His flesh.

It is only a bare outline that is given here of Peter's presentation of the moving story of the Lord's redemption; and what

wonder that his discourse, so warm and tender, went home to his hearers' hearts, satisfying their long yearning? They responded to his closing appeal: "whosoever believeth in Him, shall receive remission of sins"; and even as on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fell on them, "putting a new song in their mouths, even praise unto our God." It was a surprise to the Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter from Joppa (cf. ver. 23) that uncircumcised Gentiles should thus share the grace of the Covenant; but so it was, and they recognised that where the grace had been vouchsafed, there the seal of Baptism should be set.

(3) THE QUESTION BEFORE THE CHURCH

xi. 1-18

1 *And the apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.*

2 *And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,*

3 *Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.*

4 *But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying,*

5 *I was in the city of Joppa praying : and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners ; and it came even to me :*

6 *Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.*

7 *And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter ; slay and eat.*

8 *But I said, Not so, Lord : for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.*

9 *But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.*

10 *And this was done three times : and all were drawn up again into heaven.*

11 *And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cæsarea unto me.*

12 *And the spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house :*

13 *And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter ;*

14 *Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.*

15 *And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.*

16 *Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.*

17 *Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ ; what was I, that I could withstand God ?*

18 *When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*

AT the desire of Cornelius and his friends Peter stayed on at Cæsarea, and he would continue the work of evangelisation so impressively inaugurated in that heathen city. He “tarried certain days” ; and though the indefinite phrase, unlike “many days” (cf. ix. 23, 43), suggests that his stay was but short, it was long enough for a report of his doings to reach the ears not only of his fellow Apostles at Jerusalem but of all the Christian communities throughout the Holy Land (cf. i. 8). It was in Jewish esteem a startling development, and it not merely occasioned general surprise but awakened the resentment of “them of the circumcision”—a designation which figures largely in the subsequent controversy (cf. Gal. ii. 12 ; Tit. i. 10), denoting the narrower sort of Jewish believers, who clung to the ancient ceremonial and insisted on its perpetual observance. They did not indeed oppose the reception of Gentile believers into the fellowship of the Church, but they claimed that these should first become Jews by accepting the Law and, more especially, submitting to the rite of circumcision, the seal of the ancient covenant.

They raised the question on Peter’s return to Jerusalem, probably after his presentation of a report of his mission at a meeting of the Church (cf. xiv. 27). And what was his reply ? He did not argue the question ; for as yet in truth he was himself perplexed and had still to think it out and determine in his

own mind the relation between the Law and the Gospel—a task reserved for one better qualified, the Apostle of the Gentiles. He took a safer and surer course. He simply recounted what had occurred, and let this speak for itself ; and it is remarkable that though he has twice already told the story, St. Luke repeats it yet again in full detail. It was the earliest charter of universal grace, and St. Luke, himself a Gentile, gloried in it. He could not repeat it too often. The mere recital was more convincing than argument, and it settled the question and, for the present at all events, silenced opposition. “ It isn’t for men to make channels for God’s Spirit, as they make channels for the water-courses, and say, ‘ Flow here, but flow not there.’ ”

SYRIAN ANTIOCH

xi. 19-26

19 *Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.*

20 *And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.*

21 *And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.*

22 *Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.*

23 *Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.*

24 *For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.*

25 *Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:*

26 *And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves *with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

HERE St. Luke shows how the providence of God opened yet another channel for the outflowing of His grace to the heathen world. It was not an Apostle that now did the work but fugitives from the persecution which followed the martyrdom of Stephen. Like him they were Hellenists (see exposition of vi. 1), and they naturally drew together and

* Or, in the church.

fled northward till they passed the frontier of the Holy Land. Thereafter, secure from arrest, they gave themselves to the business of evangelisation, not merely "travelling" but "making a missionary progress," and nowhere stinting their stay, since, being Hellenists, they were in no haste to return to Jerusalem when the persecution ceased. Their mission began in the ancient land of Phœnicia with its great cities of Ptolemais, Tyre, and Sidon. Thence they crossed to the island of Cyprus; and thence, when their work was done, they re-embarked and came to Antioch on the Orontes, a heathen city with a population which numbered in St. Chrysostom's day some 200,000, ranking her after Rome and Alexandria as the third city of the Empire.

Thither they came and there they remained, finding large opportunity. Hitherto, wherever they came, they had preached only to the resident Jews; and so at the outset would they do also at Antioch where, as in every heathen city, there was a Jewish community. But after their settlement there they were led to a wider ministry, on the initiative of a large-hearted company of them, hailing some, like the generous Barnabas (cf. iv. 36), from the island of Cyprus and others, like Simon who had carried the Lord's cross (cf. Mt. xxvii. 32), from the North African city of Cyrene. It is written that they "spake" or rather "took to speaking also unto the Grecians," our Version's phrase for "the Hellenists," but this is meaningless. For not only were they Hellenists themselves but so were all the Jews in Antioch; and what St. Luke says, according to the authentic text, is that, whereas hitherto they had "spoken the Word to none but Jews only," they now "took to speaking also unto the Greeks," that is, the Gentiles, led thereto not by a vision but simply by finding the hearts of those heathen folk open to their message. And observe how, though it was the same message that they proclaimed, they adapted it to their hearers' minds. For Jewish hearers it was always that "Jesus was the Christ," the Messiah, the Promised Saviour (cf. ix. 20, 23); but now to heathen, ignorant of the Scriptures and the Hope of Israel, they simply "preached the Lord Jesus" or, as it is in the original, "told the good tidings of the Lord Jesus."

It was well that the deputy sent from Jerusalem to investigate the movement was the gracious and generous Barnabas. He not merely approved and encouraged it but, recognising its importance, desired its furtherance. He was himself no preacher (cf. xiv. 12) and, casting about for one endowed with the gift which he lacked, he bethought himself of Saul. Ever since his retreat from Jerusalem to his home at Tarsus some nine years ago (cf. ix. 30) the latter had been engaged in evangelising his native province of Syria-Cilicia (cf. Gal. i. 21-24). Confirmed in his initial estimate of the illustrious convert by the reports of his ministry which had from time to time reached Jerusalem, Barnabas recognised him as the very man whom the present occasion demanded; and he set out for Tarsus in quest of him and brought him to Antioch.

For a year Saul preached there. It was truly an *annus mirabilis*, and St. Luke discloses the wonder of it more effectively than by pages of narrative when he observes that "the disciples were called 'Christians' first in Antioch." See what this implies. Antioch was a cosmopolitan city, including in her teeming populace the native Syrians, Greeks, Jews, and latterly not a few Romans, chiefly the troops and officers of the imperial legate and their retainers. Where there is a blending of races, there is ever a clash of sentiment; and this bred in the Antiochenes an unpleasant knack of scurrility, especially in the way of coining apt and often stinging nicknames. A classic example is their treatment of the Emperor Julian the Apostate when he visited their city. Indignant at his legislative interference with their market, they pursued his progress through the streets with insulting songs and impromptu taunts, styling him "The Goat" in derision of the long, unkempt beard which he wore in imitation of the ancient philosophers, and "The Butcher" because of the multitude of victims which he sacrificed at the altars of restored paganism. It is an evidence of the stir which Saul's preaching created in the city that they coined a name for him and his numerous adherents. Indeed a name was needed. They were simply Jews, and among their own people they were differentiated as "the disciples," "the believers," "the brethren," "those of the Way"; but as the breach widened,

a distinctive designation was required, especially in Gentile communities; and this the Antiochenes supplied. The adherents of a political party or a literary school were denominated after their leader or master: the followers of Pompey, for example, were "Pompeians" and the admirers of Cicero "Ciceronians." And even so were those preachers of Christ styled "Christians."

Though rather playful than contumelious, it was a veritable nickname; and so St. Luke expressly intimates when he says that they "were *called* 'Christians.'" For the word in the original signified properly "do business," and among other derivative uses (see exposition of x. 22) it denoted "getting a name from the business one practises" (cf. Rom. vii. 3), as the "publicans" got theirs from their farming of the "public" revenue. So, because their business was Christ, the disciples were called "Christians." It was a nickname, and in the only other passages where it occurs in the New Testament (Ac. xxvi. 28; 1 Pet. iv. 16), it has a flavour of contempt; yet the disciples gladly accepted its reproach, and by bearing it nobly they quickly redeemed it and invested it with honour, even as, contrariwise, the Jesuits have made their name, properly so sacred, a byword on honest lips. "The moral of the Jesuits' story," says Thackeray, "I think as wholesome a one as ever was writ: the artfullest, the wisest, the most toilsome and dexterous plot-builders in the world—there always comes a day when the roused public indignation kicks their flimsy edifice down, and sends its cowardly enemies a-flying."

It is indeed a felicitous designation. Since it is a hybrid word, "Christ" being the Greek of the Hebrew "Messiah" and the termination Latin, like the superscription on the Cross in Hebrew and Greek and Latin it proclaims the universality of the Saviour's grace; and so the jesting Antiochenes were unwitting preachers of the Evangel.

FAMINE IN JUDÆA

xi. 27-xii

27 *And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.*

28 *And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world : which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.*

29 *Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa :*

30 *Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.*

1 *Now about that time Herod the king *stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.*

2 *And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.*

3 *And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)*

4 *And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quarternions of soldiers to keep him ; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.*

5 *Peter therefore was kept in prison : but †prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.*

6 *And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains : and the keepers before the door kept the prison.*

7 *And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison : and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.*

8 *And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.*

* Or, began.

† Or, instant and earnest prayer was made.

9 And he went out, and followed him ; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel ; but thought he saw a vision.

10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city ; which opened to them of his own accord : and they went out, and passed on through one street ; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark ; where many were gathered together praying.

13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came ^{*to} hearken, named Rhoda.

14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

16 But Peter continued knocking : and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.

17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judæa to Cæsarea, and there abode.

20 And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon : but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace ; because their country was nourished by the king's country.

21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

* Or, to ask who was there.

22 *And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.*

23 *And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory : and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.*

24 *But the word of God grew and multiplied.*

25 *And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.*

AMONG the blessings which the Saviour's advent brought was a rekindling of the spirit of prophecy which for some three centuries had been extinct in the land (cf. Ps. lxxiv. 9). It reappeared in John the Baptist, and thenceforward it remained a precious endowment of the Church. The Prophets were a recognised order, ranking next to the Apostles in importance and dignity (cf. 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29). What brought that company of Prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch? It is to answer this question that St. Luke interrupts his narrative by inserting parenthetically the apparently irrelevant story of the twelfth chapter (vers. 1-24), dwelling upon it and extending the digression in order especially to avail himself of the opportunity of introducing John Mark.

What was the situation? Herod was King Herod Agrippa I, a grandson of Herod the Great and half-brother of Herod Antipas the Tetrarch who put John the Baptist to death. Born in 10 B.C., he lived the life of a needy and dissolute adventurer, a hanger-on of the imperial court at Rome, until on the death of Tiberius in 37 A.D. he was put by his patron Caligula (37-41) in possession of Ituræa, Trachonitis, and Abilene which had composed the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias (cf. Lk. iii. 1), and dignified with the barren title of king. On the deposition of Antipas Caligula added his tetrarchy of Galilee and Peræa to Agrippa's dominion; and Claudius (41-54) on his accession not only confirmed his title but further enfeoffed him in Judæa and Samaria, thus making him master of the full territories of his grandfather Herod the Great.

Often a youthful debauchee makes an old devotee, and so

it was with Agrippa. His brief reign was a golden age of Pharisaism, and by his scrupulous ceremonialism and easy benevolence he won popular applause. It was to please the Jews that in March of the year 44 just before the Feast of the Passover he inaugurated a persecution of the Church at Jerusalem by executing the Apostle James the son of Zebedee. To gratify them still further he arrested Peter and, since an execution was illegal during the Holy Week, detained him in prison.

It was the persecution that drove those prophets to seek an asylum in Antioch, and here St. Luke might have ended his historical interlude ; but it was a moving story, and he tells it out. Observe the significance of that sentence "when Herod would have brought him forth" or rather "was about to produce him." It means that the Holy Week had run its course. It closed on the Sabbath, and next morning—the morning of the first Day of the week—the prisoner should be executed. All the week long, as the original has it, "prayer was being made intensely (the word rendered "earnestly" in Lk. xxii. 44) by the Church for him"—a very agony of entreaty ; and on this last night in their various meeting-places the disciples were keeping anxious and despairing vigil.

Little dreamed they of the deliverance which was even then being wrought. Since "angel" signifies in the original merely "a messenger" (see exposition of v. 19), it is open to question here as in other like cases what manner of angel it was that did the Lord's errand ; but does not St. Luke expressly preclude the idea of a supernatural visitation when he tells (ver. 9) how the astonished Apostle "thought" or rather "fancied he saw a vision" ? It seemed to him too wonderful to be true, and he supposed it a dream till he found himself in the street ; and then he realised that "the Lord sent His messenger and delivered him." The plain suggestion of the narrative is that it was a human messenger ; and who else could this be than the master of the prison ? Like many another in Jerusalem in those days he had long been "halting between two opinions," and his dealings with the prisoner during the past week had so moved him that he determined at the last to procure his release. Observe

how natural and intelligible it all is on this view: the sudden blaze of light in the (not "prison" but) "cell" on the gaoler's entrance, lantern in hand; the rousing of the dazed prisoner by smiting his side; the hasty unlocking of his fetters; the injunction to don his clothes and follow; the passing of the sentries without challenge, since they knew the gaoler; the yielding of the outer gate, which he had left unbolted and ajar; and his stealthy retreat when he had the prisoner on the street.

Mary's spacious house—where, as it seems (see exposition of Mk. xiv. 12-16, 51, 52), the Lord had eaten the Last Supper with the Eleven—was not only one of the meeting-places of the disciples in Jerusalem but a rendezvous of the Apostles, especially Peter, who was ever welcome there forasmuch as it was he that had led her son John Mark to the Saviour (cf. 1 Pet. v. 13). It was natural that he should now betake himself thither, all the more that he would meet there an assemblage of the brethren. So vivid and intimate is the portrayal of the scene which ensued on his presenting himself at "the door of the gate" or rather "gateway"—the entrance into the courtyard of the mansion—that it must needs be the story of one who was present; and it may well be that St. Luke had it from John Mark in the after-days of their intimacy. Observe the humour of his description of the company's incredulity. For a whole week they had been praying for Peter's deliverance, and they were praying for it at that moment; yet when their prayer was answered, they would not believe it. When Rhoda ("Rose") told them that he was standing at the door, they said she was mad; and when she persisted, they said it was "his angel" (see exposition of Mt. xviii. 10). Anything was possible but the answering of their prayer (cf. Jo. xx. 25). But they had their lesson.

If a flower
Were thrown you out of heaven at intervals,
You'd soon attain to a trick of looking up.

And thus it is that God rebukes His people's faithlessness and conquers their incredulity—by glad surprises, thrusting His gifts into their closed hands, that they may attain the trick of looking up.

The persecution was brief. Beginning in March of the year 44, it ended dramatically with the death of Agrippa at the Roman capital of Cæsarea, the seat of the imperial procurator, in the ensuing summer. It was a state occasion, and he was giving audience on some disputed question to deputies from the neighbouring cities of Tyre and Sidon, when amid the fulsome plaudits which greeted his oration, "an (not "the") angel of the Lord smote him." In this instance the "messenger" was neither a heavenly visitant nor a human avenger but a fatal sickness. According to Josephus it was a sharp pain in the intestines, but St. Luke, as became a physician, is more precise and defines it as cancer; for so the phrase "eaten of worms" signified in the medical parlance of the time.

And now return to the situation at Antioch. It hardly required supernatural inspiration for Agabus to predict the famine; for during the reign of Claudius "all the world" or, as the original signifies (cf. Lk. ii. 1), "the whole Empire" was afflicted, says Suetonius, with "incessant dearths," and the prophet, quick to read "the signs of the times," would recognise that his own poor country's turn must come. And so it did in the years 45-46. Nor did his admonition pass unheeded. It was in the summer of 45 that Saul on the invitation of Barnabas came to Antioch; and, realising what famine would mean for their brethren at Jerusalem, they prompted their Gentile converts to generous action. A fund was raised, and in the summer of 46 (cf. Gal. ii. 1) they were deputed to convey relief to the sufferers.

See here the ultimate issue of that experiment in social reorganisation which the primitive believers had adventured upon in the flush of early enthusiasm (cf. ii. 44, 45, iv. 34-37). They had pooled their resources, and for a season it had seemed as though the Golden Age had dawned. There was no destitution, since each received his daily dole (cf. vi. 1); but presently trouble emerged. Not only were there jealousies and bickerings and allegations of partiality in "the daily ministration" but, as contemporary literature testifies, a horde of greedy idlers swarmed into the Church for the sake of "the loaves and fishes," bringing shame on the Gospel and exposing it to the sarcasms of

unbelievers (cf. v. 1-11). Then came the famine, and it demonstrated the folly of "endeavouring," in Dumas' phrase, "to organise property by generalising poverty." Already the common store had been consumed, and with no reserve against emergency they must have perished but for charitable intervention. This dire strait was the doom of the luckless innovation; but it is always easier to dislocate the delicate fabric of social organisation than to repair it, and ever afterwards until the destruction of the city in the year 70 the Church there was a pauper community, supported by the regular "contributions for the poor saints of Jerusalem" which St. Paul levied of his Gentile converts (cf. Gal. ii. 10; 1 Cor. xvi. 1-3; 2 Cor. viii, ix; Rom. xv. 25; Ac. xxiv. 17).

St. Luke has here recorded nothing of the doings of Barnabas and Saul during their visit to Jerusalem, but he suggests much when he says that they "returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry" or rather "ministration." They did not merely deliver the bounty and hasten back to Antioch. They assisted in its administration, and not till the need was abated was their task "fulfilled." Nor was this their sole employment. For see what Saul has himself told us (cf. Gal. ii. 1-10). Their retinue included Titus, a young convert whom he had won at Antioch (cf. Tit. i. 4), and the appearance of an uncircumcised Gentile in their company raised the question of the necessity of circumcision. It was, for the present at all events, amicably settled, and Saul addressed himself to the business of confessing Christ in the city where he had played the persecutor. It was an heroic adventure, and he braved the peril until, as he has told us (cf. Ac. xxii. 17-21), he was charged by the Risen Lord to quit Jerusalem and carry the Gospel "far hence unto the Gentiles."

Thus was he called to the work for which all his chequered past had been a providential preparation; and he found in Barnabas a willing coadjutor. They bade Jerusalem farewell and, taking with them Barnabas' young cousin (cf. Col. iv. 10 R.V.) John Mark, returned to Antioch.

PAUL'S FIRST MISSION (xiii, xiv)

ORDINATION AT ANTIOCH

xiii. 1-3

1 *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers ; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, *which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.*

2 *As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*

3 *And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*

SINCE Antioch was established as the metropolis of Gentile Christendom, it was fitting that the missionaries to the Gentiles should receive their commission there ; and St. Luke is very careful to vindicate its Church's competence for so high and sacred an office. " Now," runs the sentence in the original, " there were at Antioch in connection with the Church there Prophets and Teachers." Observe the significance hereof. " The Church there " is literally " the existing Church," meaning that, though so recently instituted, it was already fully organised and equipped. None of the original Apostles indeed had to do either with its foundation or with its development, yet it possessed an ordered and authoritative ministry. For even as the Church of Jerusalem had its college of Apostles, so had the Church of Antioch its college of Prophets and Teachers. What the former were has already appeared (see exposition of xi. 27) ; but what were the latter ? In those early days when as yet there was no written Gospel, the story of our Lord's earthly

* Or, Herod's foster-brother.

ministry was orally transmitted ; and to the order of Teachers belonged the business of preserving and communicating the sacred and precious tradition. It was a most needful office ; and even as the Prophets ranked next to the Apostles, so the Teachers ranked next to the Prophets (cf. 1 Cor. xii. 28). And justly so ; for what our Gospels are to us, this the Teachers were to the primitive believers.

The Antiochene college of Prophets and Teachers numbered five. Barnabas and Saul are already familiar, but the others are known only by their mention here. Perhaps they belonged to that company of Prophets who had been driven from Jerusalem by Agrippa's persecution (cf. xi. 27). Their colleague Agabus had returned thither when the danger passed (cf. xxi. 10), but they had remained at Antioch. It appears that Manaen (the Hebrew *Menahem*) was one of the few personages of rank in the primitive Church. For he had been the " foster-brother " of Herod Antipas, the late Tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa ; and this in the parlance of the time was an official title, signifying not merely a courtier but an intimate of the prince.

On their return to Antioch Barnabas and Saul would take counsel with these their colleagues on the resolution which they had formed at Jerusalem, acquainting them how they had been led thereto. So momentous an enterprise was not to be lightly undertaken ; but the testimony of the Holy Spirit, ever vouchsafed where it is earnestly desired, assured them that was indeed the will of God, and it only remained that the missionaries should be " separated " or " set apart " (cf. Rom. i. 1 ; Gal. i. 15) for the work whereunto they had been so manifestly called.

THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS

xiii. 4-12

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia ; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews : and they had also John to their minister.

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus :

7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man ; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord ?

11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness ; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

EVEN as of old a Hebrew prophet went attended by a young disciple (cf. 2 Ki. vi. 15) and a mediæval knight by a squire, so the missionaries took John Mark with them as their " minister " or " attendant " that he might not only aid them, especially in the capacity of their amanuensis, but learn by their example the art of an evangelist. Seleucia was the port of Antioch, and thence they sailed for Cyprus, a large island some

three hundred and ninety miles in circuit and a hundred and sixty in length from east to west. Its fertility and its mineral wealth made it populous and prosperous, and earned it the rank of a senatorial province under the government of a "deputy" or rather "proconsul." It was natural that they should betake themselves thither. For (1) Barnabas belonged to Cyprus (cf. iv. 36), and he would desire that his people should hear the Gospel. (2) Though it had already been preached there by the fugitives from the first persecution (cf. xi. 19), these had addressed only the Jewish communities, and it was now fitting that their Gentile neighbours also should hear the glad tidings. And (3) the island was but a stepping-stone betwixt Syria and the southern coast of Asia Minor, the ultimate destination of the missionaries.

Landing at Salamis on the eastward side, they availed themselves, after their wont, of the opportunity which an open door presented by preaching in the synagogues of the town. Thence they—not merely "went through the isle" but—"made a missionary progress through the whole island" until they reached Paphos in the extreme west, where they achieved a signal triumph. Paphos was the Roman capital, and there the Proconsul Sergius Paulus resided. St. Luke characterises him as "a prudent" or rather "a shrewd man," observant and judicial; and it is an interesting attestation hereof that among his authorities for the second and eighteenth books of his great work on "Natural History," published in the year 77, where much curious information is given regarding the island of Cyprus, the elder Pliny mentions the name of Sergius Paulus. During his term of office the Proconsul had noted the natural features and resources of the historic island and the manners of its people; and the doings of the missionaries would inevitably engage his ever alert attention. On their arrival at Paphos he cited them before him and questioned them.

Of old, when it was fancied that there was, as Bacon has it, "correspondence or concatenation between the superior globe and the inferior," princes and rulers, for the direction of their policy, employed astrologers to read the tokens of the stars; and as the Emperor Tiberius had his Thrasyllus and King Louis

XI of France his Martius Galeotti, so Sergius Paulus had his "sorcerer" or, as it is in the original, *magus*, the word which, where it occurs in the story of the Nativity (cf. Mt. ii. 1, where see exposition), our Version renders "wise man" and Milton "wizard." His name or rather patronymic was Bar-Jesus, "Son of Jesus" or "Joshua," proving that, like so many Oriental charlatans in those days, he was a Jew; but he went by his official title of *Elymas* which, as St. Luke explains, signifies in Aramaic "the Sorcerer" or "Wizard." He was present at the interview and, observing how deeply his master was impressed and fearful of losing his lucrative office, he kept interrupting until Saul turned indignantly upon him and put him to silence.

This is the first recorded miracle of the Apostle of the Gentiles; and since miracles were "signs of an Apostle" (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 12), it was an attestation of his apostolic calling. Observe how appropriately St. Luke here announces his change of style—"Saul who (not "is also called" but) was also Paul," indicating that he had borne both names all along. Like every Jew in those days he had both a Jewish and a Gentile name (cf. ix. 36); and as William Burns, China's devoted missionary, assumed the Chinese dress and manners, "to the Chinese becoming as a Chinese that he might gain the Chinese," even so, when Saul entered on his apostleship to the Gentiles, he disused his Jewish name and thenceforth went by his Gentile name of Paul.

It was indeed a stern sentence that he pronounced. Observe the scorn of that epithet "thou (not "child" but) son of the Devil"—a play upon the name Bar-Jesus, "Son of Jesus." Yet there was shame in his severity too, and withal a gracious purpose. For the Wizard's opposition brought to his remembrance his own enmity against the Gospel; and when he smote him with blindness, not for ever but only "for a season," it was a reminiscence of his own experience on the road to Damascus when he was stricken blind and needed "some to lead him by the hand" (cf. ix. 8). He had himself been a blasphemer and injurious, but had obtained mercy through humiliation and suffering; and he "would have his companion in sin partake of mercy too."

SOUTHERN GALATIA (xiii. 13-xiv)

I. PISIDIAN ANTIOCH

xiii. 13-52

13 *Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia : and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.*

14 *But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.*

15 *And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.*

16 *Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.*

17 *The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.*

18 *And about the time of forty years *suffered he their manners in the wilderness.*

19 *And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.*

20 *And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.*

21 *And afterward they desired a king : and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.*

22 *And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king ; to whom also he gave testimony, and said,*

* Gr. *ἐτροφοφόρησεν*, perhaps for *ἐτροφοφόρησεν*, *bore*, or, *fed them*, as a nurse beareth, or, *feedeth her child*, Deut. i. 31, according to the LXX. and so Chrysostom.

I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

23 *Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus :*

24 *When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.*

25 *And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am ? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.*

26 *Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.*

27 *For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.*

28 *And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.*

29 *And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.*

30 *But God raised him from the dead :*

31 *And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.*

32 *And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,*

33 *God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again ; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*

34 *And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure *mercies of David.*

35 *Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

36 *For David, †after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption :*

* Gr. τὰ ὅσια, *holy*, or, *just things*: which word the LXX. both in the place of Is. lv. 3, and in many others, use for that which is in the Hebrew, *mercies*.

† Or, *after he had in his own age served the will of God.*

37 *But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.*

38 *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins :*

39 *And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

40 *Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets :*

41 *Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish : for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.*

42 *And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them *the next sabbath.*

43 *Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas : who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.*

44 *And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.*

45 *But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.*

46 *Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you : but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.*

47 *For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.*

48 *And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord : and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*

49 *And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.*

50 *But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women,*

* Gr. *in the week between*, or, *in the sabbath between.*

and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

EMBARKING at Paphos, the missionaries sailed for the Province of Pamphylia on the southern coast of Asia Minor. There they had designed pursuing their enterprise, and it was indeed a fitting arena. For Pamphylia was a fertile and prosperous country, and since its population included numerous Jewish settlers (cf. ii. 10), there was no lack of synagogues where they might obtain an initial hearing. They would land at the port of Attalia (cf. xiv. 25), and thence they travelled inland to Perga, the capital of the Province, a typically heathen city devoted to the worship of the goddess Artemis (Diana).

Here befell a mischance which thwarted their plan and which, disquieting at the moment, proved in truth a hidden providence, directing them to a larger issue. St. Luke says nothing of it, respecting herein his brave master's constant reticence regarding his personal afflictions; but the latter has himself dropped an illuminating suggestion in a subsequent reference to the present crisis (cf. Gal. iv. 13-15). Pamphylia was a low-lying region, encircling the Pamphylian Gulf and backed northward by the long range of Taurus; and then as now in the summertime its sweltering climate was trying especially for strangers. It was midsummer when the missionaries landed. For since navigation was suspended during the winter from the autumnal equinox to the second week in February, it would be about the beginning of March when they set sail from Seleucia, and in view of the extent of their operations in Cyprus it would be July ere they landed in Pamphylia. Here, it would seem, exhausted by his labours, Paul sickened of malaria, contracting a chronic malady—"an infirmity of the flesh," as he terms it—which ever afterwards handicapped him in his ministry

until he was taught by grace to turn it to account (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 7-9).

Meanwhile he was obliged to abandon his purpose of evangelising Pamphylia ; and his discomfiture was aggravated by the defection of his attendant. " John," it is written, " departed from them and returned to Jerusalem." Thus St. Luke slurs over his offence in consideration of the ample amends which he subsequently made ; yet, brief as it is, the sentence is sharply condemnatory. Observe (1) the culprit is called no longer John Mark (cf. xii. 12, 25) but simply John. The point is that this was his Jewish name, and on joining the mission to the Gentiles he would, like Saul, bear his Gentile name of Mark, but now that he has abandoned the brave enterprise he is shorn of the distinction. (2) It is written here merely that he " departed," but several authorities have another word which by the difference of a single letter signifies " retreated," denoting a precipitate flight (cf. Mt. ii. 12, 13, 14, 22, where see exposition). And John's " departure " was nothing else. It was the weakness of a youth nurtured in a comfortable home, a fond mother's only child. " Either," says old Matthew Henry, " he did not like the work, or he wanted to go see his mother."

It was impossible for Paul to remain in the sultry lowlands, but he would not abandon his mission. He would seek another field, and his thoughts naturally turned northward to the fresh uplands beyond the ridge of Taurus. There lay the imperial Province of Galatia, stretching diagonally across Asia Minor and comprehending a variety of countries formerly independent—in the north most of the old kingdom of Pontus on the Euxine and Paphlagonia, the whole of ancient Galatia, most of Lycaonia and Pisidia, and the south-eastern corner of Phrygia. Thither he and Barnabas betook themselves ; and, summary as it is, St. Luke's language in the original is here expressive. " John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem ; but they themselves"—forsaken by their attendant in their need—" crossed from Perga"—over the ridge of Taurus, always difficult of passage but tenfold difficult for a traveller enfeebled by sickness—" and arrived at Pisidian Antioch." Observe the description of the city—literally " Antioch the Pisidian." It was in Phrygia

near the western border of Pisidia ; but since there were several Antiochs, it was known, by way of distinction especially from Antioch on the Mæander, another station on the Trade Route from the East, as " Antioch toward Pisidia," a cumbrous designation shortened in common parlance to " Pisidian Antioch." Founded by Seleucus Nicator (312-280 B.C.) and named after his father Antiochus, it was originally a Greek town with an admixture of native Phrygians and a settlement of Jews whom he invested with civic rights ; and after it passed under the imperial rule Augustus made it a Roman colony, a link in a chain of military stations for the protection of the Trade Route.

Antioch was an effective stage for the launching of a mission in southern Galatia. Not only had it a synagogue where the missionaries might make a ready beginning in the proclamation of their message, but the congregation included many of the " God-fearers " or " Devout " (cf. vers. 16, 26, 43, 50), those heathen seekers after God (cf. x. 1, 2), generally intelligent and educated folk, who by reason of their spiritual need were peculiarly accessible to the appeal of the Gospel and, where they received it, effectively commended it to their fellow Gentiles. So numerous were they that in addressing the congregation Paul took them expressly into account : " Ye men of Israel and ye fearers of God " ; " Brethren, sons of Abraham's race and the fearers of God among you."

The missionaries were strangers when they arrived at Antioch ; whence it appears that some time elapsed betwixt their arrival and that Sabbath Day when on the invitation of the rulers Paul preached in the synagogue, long enough for their fame to spread and approve their fitness for addressing the congregation. Hitherto Barnabas has had the precedence, being a man of affairs and naturally taking the lead where practical skill was needed (cf. xi. 30, xii. 25, xiii. 1, 2, 7) ; but the encounter with Elymas in the proconsular court at Paphos demanded other aptitudes (cf. xiii. 9), and thenceforward Paul was the leader of the mission (cf. vers. 13, 43, 46, 50). And with that generous self-effacement which always characterised him, Barnabas quickly took the second place, making himself of no reputation.

It was Paul who responded to the invitation of the rulers and addressed the congregation. This is the first recorded discourse of the great teacher, and the record is specially remarkable inasmuch as it is manifestly the report of a hearer, an eye-witness of the scene. Observe the introduction. It was the fashion for a Jewish teacher to sit while he discoursed (cf. Mt. v. 1; Lk. iv. 20); but, though a Jew and preaching in a synagogue, Paul "stood up," adopting as the Apostle of the Gentiles the manner of a Greek orator (cf. xvii. 22). The innovation occasioned surprise. A murmur would run through the congregation, and with a characteristic gesture (cf. xxi. 40, xxvi. 1), "beckoning with his hand," he checked it and solicited attention.

And mark the sermon. The Synagogue had a lectionary prescribing for each Sabbath passages from the Law and the Prophets; and the sermon, following the reading, was usually based on the passages just read. It would seem that then even as now the first chapter of Deuteronomy and the first of Isaiah were read together, and these were the lessons for that Sabbath Day, since the sermon begins with striking phrases occurring there—"exalted" or rather "brought up" (cf. Is. i. 2), "suffered their manners" or rather, according to the picturesque rendering of the Greek Version, "bare them as nurslings" (cf. Dt. i. 31), and "divided their land to them by lot" or rather "gave it for an inheritance" (cf. Dt. i. 38). Starting thence Paul recounts the history of God's dealings with Israel of old, a theme ever congenial to a Jewish audience: the "election" of their fathers, the deliverance from Egypt, and the settlement in Canaan—a period of some four centuries and a half according to the authentic text (vers. 19, 20): "all in the space of some four hundred and fifty years. And thereafter He gave Judges." And so he leads on to the final issue and announces the fulfilment of the nation's long hope in Jesus, the Promised Saviour—crucified, raised, and exalted evermore. Notice how inoffensively he could present this his supreme appeal. When Peter proclaimed in Jerusalem that the Crucified Lord was the Messiah, he charged his hearers with an impious crime, since it was they that had delivered Him to death (cf. iii. 13-15); but Paul's hearers at Antioch had no hand therein. See how he puts it (vers. 26, 27):

“ Brethren, sons of Abraham’s race and the fearers of God among you, to you hath the message of this salvation been sent. For the dwellers in Jerusalem and their rulers by ignoring this message fulfilled also by their judgment the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath.”

It is an evidence of the authenticity of St. Luke’s report of the sermon that it concludes with a sentence which only Paul could have spoken (vers. 38, 39)—a clear statement of that Gospel of Justification not by the works of the Law but by faith in Christ which he was the first to formulate and which he spent his life in proclaiming by voice and pen. And its reception now was a premonition of the enmity which it afterwards aroused in Jewish breasts. Observe how his tone here changes (vers. 40, 41). Evidently his Jewish hearers of the narrower sort resented his seeming depreciation of the Law ; and he closes with a stern warning in prophetic language (cf. Hab. i. 5).

See what ensued. The authentic text runs thus : “ And they (the objectors) held their peace. And as they (Paul and Barnabas) were going out (abruptly quitting the synagogue to avoid idle disputation), they (the congregation) besought that these words might be spoken to them on the next Sabbath.” And more than that. So keen was the interest that, “ when the synagogue was dismissed, many of the Jews and the Devout (omit “ proselytes ”) followed Paul and Barnabas ; and they accosted them and urged them to abide by the grace of God.” That was their reason for hastening after the missionaries. They were eager to hear more of the gracious message, and feared lest they should be intimidated by the opposition they had encountered.

The opposition hardened during the week ; and next Sabbath, when their message was contumeliously assailed, the missionaries adopted the course which thenceforward they constantly pursued. They had made their appeal to the Jews, and it had been rejected, and they “ turned to the Gentiles ” (cf. xxviii. 24–28). The synagogue had served their turn by introducing them to the city, and they addressed themselves to the ministry thus opened to them. Exasperated by their success, the Jewish leaders resorted to an effective stratagem. It is

remarkable how largely the Jewish religion appealed at that period to Gentile ladies of rank throughout the Roman Empire ; and there were several such among the God-fearers of Antioch, "devout women of honourable estate." These would be the wives of officers, civil and military, of the imperial government, "the chief men of the city" ; and the rulers of the synagogue by playing upon their religious prejudices induced them to influence their husbands. It was easy to represent the missionaries as dangerous propagandists ; and the result was that they were expelled from the bounds of the city, not without violence (cf. 2 Tim. iii. 11).

Who was it that has thus reported what befell not only at Antioch but, as will presently appear (cf. xiv. 6, 21-23), throughout the mission in southern Galatia with an intimate knowledge which stamps him as an eye-witness ? He was none other than St. Luke himself. The earliest tradition has it simply that he belonged to Antioch ; and afterwards, when the lesser towns of that name had sunk into obscurity, it was naturally supposed that Syrian Antioch was meant. But there is not a vestige of authentic evidence of his connection therewith, insomuch that the tradition has been largely discredited. An attentive perusal of the narrative, revealing as it does a personal acquaintance with the localities, demonstrates that Pisidian and not Syrian Antioch was his home. It was there that he practised as a physician ; and thus perhaps it was that he obtained his first introduction to the Apostle, being summoned to attend the invalid on his arrival in the city (cf. Gal. iv. 13, 14). He was a Gentile, yet he was present in the synagogue on that memorable Sabbath, and since he was uncircumcised (cf. Col. iv. 11, 14), he was not a proselyte but a God-fearer.

2. ICONIUM : LYSTRA : DERBE

xiv. 1-20

1 *And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.*

2 *But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.*

3 *Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.*

4 *But the multitude of the city was divided : and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.*

5 *And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them,*

6 *They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about :*

7 *And there they preached the gospel.*

8 *And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked :*

9 *The same heard Paul speak : who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,*

10 *Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.*

11 *And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.*

12 *And they called Barnabas, Jupiter ; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.*

13 *Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.*

14 *Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,*

15 *And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein :*

16 *Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.*

17 *Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.*

18 *And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.*

19 *And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.*

20 *Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city : and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.*

IT was the end of October when the missionaries were expelled from Antioch, and it would be the first week of November when they reached Iconium, over eighty miles eastward—an ancient city, now garrisoned like Antioch with imperial troops for the protection of the Trade Route. Its populace included numerous Jews who, like other important Hellenist communities, had civil magistrates of their own, denominated “ Archons ” or “ Rulers.”

Our text, here somewhat obscure, is thus elucidated in Beza's Manuscript : “ And it came to pass at Iconium that he entered in the same fashion (cf. xiii. 14) into the synagogue of the Jews, and so talked unto them that a great multitude of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the Jews' Rulers of the Synagogue and their Archons brought persecution upon them and evil affected the souls of the Gentiles against the brethren. But the Lord soon gave peace.” The peace continued “ long time,” no less, as appears in the sequel, than all winter and spring, and they successfully prosecuted their mission in the

city ; but meanwhile the Jewish authorities, baulked in their initial aggression, persisted in poisoning the minds of the baser sort of the populace, and early in the summer, at the instigation of the Archons, an indiscriminate mob set upon them and would have pelted them with stones had they not fled betimes.

Lystra, some twenty odd miles south of Iconium, was the eastmost of the military stations guarding the Trade Route. An uncommercial town, it had no attraction for Jewish settlers though it contained at least one Jewish home (cf. xvi. 1-3) where the missionaries would find a welcome and probably abode during their stay. The principal deities were Zeus and Hermes or, as they were named in Latin, Jupiter and Mercurius, by reason of a fable that once upon a time they had appeared there in the likeness of needy wayfarers and " begg'd from door to door in vain " till they were entertained in a humble cottage.

Where there was no synagogue, the missionaries could but preach to casual gatherings in street and market-place ; and it was difficult to instil the Gospel into pagan minds unacquainted with the Hope of Israel and the Scriptures' testimony thereto. It is such a gathering that they are now addressing ; and St. Luke pictures the scene when he says: " This one was hearkening to Paul as he talked." The rest were indifferent, but his affliction had opened the cripple's heart ; and the Apostle, observing his wistful look, forthwith healed him, at once in compassion and in the hope of awakening general interest.

The device so far succeeded that it roused the listless crowd, yet their wonderment was little worth. Reminded by the miracle of the old legend, they raised the cry that their patron deities had again come down to them in the likeness of men. The eloquent Paul they took for Hermes, " the messenger of the gods," and his grave, silent comrade for Zeus, " the King of gods and men " ; and they dispersed to prepare due honours, carrying the tidings, as the authentic text has it, to " the priest of Zeus Propolis "—" the Guardian of the City."

Observe the situation. Paul had been preaching in the Common Greek, the *lingua franca* of the period, and his hearers understood it ; but in their excitement they lapsed into their

Lycaonian vernacular. This was unintelligible to the missionaries, and they betook themselves to their abode ignorant what the outcry meant ; nor did they realise what was afoot until the crowd appeared at their gateway, escorting the priest who had provided himself with oxen garlanded for sacrifice and a portable altar. Horrified at the blasphemy, they " rent their garments " (cf. Mt. xxvi. 65), rushed out, and vigorously protested.

On discovering their mistake the enthusiasts naturally felt foolish and withal aggrieved ; and by and by their smouldering resentment was fanned into a flame. The narrative is thus amplified by several authorities : " And as they were wearing away the time and teaching there, certain Jews arrived from Iconium and Antioch. And as they were reasoning boldly, these stirred up the multitudes to withdraw from them, saying that nothing they said was true but all lies. And they stoned Paul, etc." The neighbourhood of Lystra, being well watered, enjoys a fertility that is rare in those generally arid uplands, and at harvest toward the end of August merchants still resort thither from the adjoining towns to purchase grain. It was now the season of harvest (cf. ver. 17), and those Jews from Iconium and Antioch were grain-dealers. Observe that, according to the revised text, it was not they but the heathen rabble at their instigation that stoned Paul ; and whereas at Iconium they merely, as the original has it, " flung stones " (ver. 5), here they actually " stoned " the Apostle. Happily he was only stunned ; and it is an evidence that he had achieved a measure of success in the town that on his regaining consciousness " the disciples "—the converts whom he had won—were gathered about his prostrate form. It was, according to several authorities, evening, and they conveyed him to his lodging. Next day he took his painful way with Barnabas thirty odd miles south-eastward to Derbe, a frontier-town of the Province of Galatia and a customs-station on the Trade Route.

THE RETURN JOURNEY

xiv. 21-28

21 *And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,*

22 *Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*

23 *And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*

24 *And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.*

25 *And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia :*

26 *And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.*

27 *And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.*

28 *And there they abode long time with the disciples.*

IT was September when they reached Derbe, and it appears that they stayed there until mid winter. What detained them so long in so unimportant a place? It was not merely that Paul had need of repose for the healing of his wounds but that the Gospel, commended doubtless by the preacher's courage, found there a large welcome. "They evangelised that city and made many disciples," and at least one of these was by and by numbered among the Apostle's comrades (cf. xx. 4).

Though they had now attained the farthest limit of southern Galatia, yet their mission there was barely accomplished. For they had been abruptly expelled from each of the towns

which they had visited, leaving their converts "as sheep having no shepherd." And so it was needful that ere addressing themselves to a fresh enterprise they should, at all hazards, retrace their steps and knit up the broken threads of their ministry. "They returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples with exhortation to abide in the Faith and"—mark what is written—"that through many afflictions must we enter into the Kingdom of God." Here St. Luke reports what he had heard with his own ears, plainly attesting that he resided at Antioch, and was one of the disciples who there waited on the returning missionaries and received their admonitions.

Nor were they content with admonition. "Many coals," says Samuel Rutherford, "make a good fire, and that is a part of the communion of saints"; and already the Apostle had recognised the expediency of uniting his converts everywhere in an ordered community, a fellowship of faith and service and mutual helpfulness (cf. Tit. i. 5). And so he now organises a church in each town. Observe the procedure. It is written not that "they ordained them Elders" but that "they elected for them Elders"; and the word, occurring only once again in the New Testament (cf. 2 Cor. viii. 19), signifies literally "elected by a show of hands." It was the disciples that chose the men whom by personal acquaintance with them they judged most fit; and thereafter the missionaries commended these to the Lord, so ordaining them to their sacred office.

From Antioch they journeyed southward. It was the road which Paul, enfeebled by sickness, had travelled painfully in July of the year 47; and now, restored to health, he avails himself of the opportunity denied him then. For it is written that they not merely "passed" but "made a missionary progress through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia." At Perga, the capital, where Paul had sickened, they "spake the Word"; but they made no long stay. For it would now be early summer and, mindful of their previous experience, they would quit Pamphylia ere the sultry season set in. It would be June when they set sail from Attalia, and they would reach Syrian Antioch toward mid summer of the year 49.

THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM

xv. 1-35

1 *And certain men which came down from Judæa taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.*

2 *When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.*

3 *And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles : and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.*

4 *And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.*

5 *But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.*

6 *And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.*

7 *And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.*

8 *And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us ;*

9 *And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.*

10 *Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear ?*

11 *But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.*

12 *Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.*

13 *And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me :*

14 *Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.*

15 *And to this agree the words of the prophets ; as it is written,*

16 *After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down ; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up :*

17 *That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.*

18 *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.*

19 *Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God :*

20 *But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.*

21 *For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.*

22 *Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas ; namely, Judas surnamed Barnabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren :*

23 *And they wrote letters by them after this manner ; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia :*

24 *Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law : to whom we gave no such commandment :*

25 *It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,*

26 *Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

27 *We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.*

28 *For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things ;*

29 *That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication : from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.*

30 *So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch : and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle :*

31 *Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the *consolation.*

32 *And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.*

33 *And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.*

34 *Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.*

35 *Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.*

WHAT was the grievance of the Judaists at Jerusalem, believing Pharisees who retained their Pharisaic prejudices? They would in no wise have excluded the Gentiles from the fellowship of the Church, but they asserted the abiding obligation of the ceremonial law and insisted that faith alone was insufficient. It was essential to salvation that believing Gentiles should "be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses." Already their objection had been authoritatively overruled (cf. xi. 1-18), but they remained dissatisfied, and on hearing of the missionaries' claim that "God had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles" they took it upon them to visit Antioch and denounce the innovation.

It was a disquieting doctrine for a community of uncircumcised believers, and it is well that they had in their midst one who perceived the gravity of the issue. See what is written here (ver. 2) in Beza's Manuscript: "Paul stoutly contended that they should so remain even as they had believed ; but those who had come down from Jerusalem charged them—

* Or, *exhortation.*

Paul and Barnabas and certain others—to go up to the Apostles and brethren at Jerusalem to have their judgment concerning this question.” The challenge was unhesitatingly accepted. Paul and his fellow delegates had no fear of the issue, nor would an adverse decision have shaken them. It was a long journey of over three hundred miles from Antioch to Jerusalem, yet they took it leisurely. “They made a missionary progress through Phœnicia and Samaria, telling the story of the conversion of the Gentiles.” Everywhere it occasioned rejoicing; and, says the Codex Bezaë, “when they arrived at Jerusalem, they were greatly received by the Church and the Apostles and the Elders. But those who had charged them to go up unto the Elders, started up, saying that it was necessary to circumcise them and charge them to keep the Law of Moses.”

Thus the question was raised, and a judicial council was held. After an open and evidently noisy (cf. ver. 12) debate Peter intervened and quietly pointed out that the question had already been decided by the case of Cornelius. “Brethren, ye know that ” not merely “a good while ago ” but literally “from ancient days ” or, as we might say, “it is ancient history now.” It was an unanswerable argument, and the assembly listened thereafter with breathless attention to an appeal more convincing than argument—the moving story of Barnabas and Paul. Observe that here Barnabas takes the lead, being so well known at Jerusalem and so trusted and beloved.

It only remained that the assembly should pronounce judgment; and the task of formulating the decision fell to James, the brother of our Lord. It was fitting that he should undertake it, since not only was he peculiarly venerated by reason of his sacred relationship but, moved doubtless by penitential sorrow for his former unbelief, he was, if tradition be true, unwearied in ascetic devotion, insomuch that he was styled “the Righteous,” and thus he was immune from the suspicion of laxity. It appears, moreover (cf. Gal. ii. 12) that the Judaist troublers of the Church at Antioch had claimed his authority; and it was well that he should now dissociate himself from them (cf. ver. 24). He characteristically introduced his motion with a quotation from the prophetic scriptures

(Am. ix. 11, 12), proving that the admission of the Gentiles was no innovation but the fulfilment of a providential purpose. "Known from Eternity unto God are all His works."

And what was the motion? It was that nothing should be required of Gentile converts beyond certain "necessary things," specified in our text as abstinence from (1) pollutions of idols, (2) fornication, (3) what is strangled, and (4) blood. All these save the second are food restrictions, since the first, subsequently (ver. 29) defined as "things sacrificed to idols," refers to that embarrassing question which confronted converts from heathenism—the legitimacy of participating in heathen feasts associated with idolatry (cf. 1 Cor. viii); while the third and fourth alike must refer to the Levitical prohibition of eating flesh which had not been bled in the slaying (cf. Lev. xvii. 10-14). And in view of our Lord's emphatic pronouncement in the days of His flesh (cf. Mk. vii. 1-23) and the lesson which Peter had learned at Joppa (cf. Ac. x. 9-16) it is indeed surprising that those restrictions should now be declared "necessary." And what is the explanation? On the evidence not alone of the Codex Bezae but of St. Irenæus and other witnesses earlier than our oldest manuscripts the phrase "what is strangled" or "things strangled" is a late interpolation. And so the restrictions are threefold: abstinence from (1) participation in idolatrous and licentious festivities, (2) blood, signifying not the eating but the shedding of blood, and (3) fornication. These are indeed "necessary things"; and they are the sole restrictions which the Council imposed.

The decree was not merely a vindication of the missionaries: it was the charter of Gentile liberty; and to allay the inquietude which the Judaistic propaganda had occasioned, two of the Prophets of Jerusalem were deputed to accompany Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch and communicate the decree to the disciples there. One was Judas Barsabbas, perhaps a brother of Joseph Barsabbas (cf. i. 23); and the other Silas, of whom more anon. There was no lingering by the way on the homeward journey. "They came down to Antioch," says the Codex Bezae, "in a few days." So eager were they to tell the good news.

PAUL'S SECOND MISSION (xv. 36-xviii. 22)

THROUGH SOUTHERN GALATIA

xv. 36-xvi. 5

36 *And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.*

37 *And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.*

38 *But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.*

39 *And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other : and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus ;*

40 *And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.*

41 *And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.*

1 *Then came he to Derbe and Lystra : and, behold a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed ; but his father was a Greek :*

2 *Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.*

3 *Him would Paul have to go forth with him ; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters : for they knew all that his father was a Greek.*

4 *And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.*

5 *And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.*

THE missionaries had been busily and profitably employed since their return to Antioch in midsummer of the year 49, and apparently Barnabas would have been content to remain there. But Paul had recognised that the evangelisation of heathendom was his vocation, and now he is fain to resume the work. He had laid his plans. First of all he would revisit his converts in Southern Galatia, but instead of taking ship to Attalia he would travel overland through the united Province of Syria-Cilicia and cross the Taurus by the pass known as the Cilician Gates. The reason was that he desired to visit by the way the churches created in Syria-Cilicia through the evangelical activities of the Antiochene Christians; and there is here a useful evidence of the time of his setting forth, inasmuch as it was not until the close of May that the melting of the winter snow opened the passage through the Cilician Gates.

He had no other thought but that the good comrade of his first mission should go forth with him again; but here he encountered a bitter disappointment. Barnabas desired that his young cousin John Mark should again accompany them as their attendant. In the kindness of his heart he would have condoned the lad's delinquency (cf. xiii. 13) and given him another chance; and it may justify his leniency that, as appears in the sequel and as the Apostle at the last touchingly acknowledged (cf. 2 Tim. iv. 11), Mark right nobly retrieved his good name. But Paul was made of sterner stuff, and he would have none of him. "One," he exclaimed, as the original has it, "who deserted from us in Pamphylia and went not with us to the work! I refuse to take this fellow with us." It was a bitter speech, and it stung even the gentle Barnabas. "The contention was sharp between them" or rather "there ensued exasperation." The Greek word is *paroxysm*, and it is one of St. Luke's medical terms, signifying the irritation of a sore by rough handling. "There ensued irritation, insomuch that they were sundered from one another."

Perhaps Paul was right; for it may be that it was his scorn that moved Mark to shame and nerved him to redeem the past. Yet the severance of those two great souls was a tragic issue.

Alas, how light a cause may move
Dissension between hearts that love !
Hearts that the world in vain had tried
And sorrow but more closely tied !
A something, light as air—a look,
A word unkind or wrongly taken—
Oh ! love, that tempests never shook,
A breath, a touch like this hath shaken.

“ Any sudden rupture of love or friendship,” says Novalis, “ is like a shipwreck.” And surely it would be especially grievous to Paul when his indignation cooled and he remembered how much he owed to the generosity of Barnabas in his day of shame (cf. ix. 26, 27) and to his faithful comradeship.

They parted and went their several ways. As his new comrade Paul chose Silas or, as his name was in full, Silvanus (cf. 2 Cor. i. 19 ; 1 Th. i. 1 ; 2 Th. i. 1 ; 1 Pet. v. 12) ; and it was indeed a happy choice. For Silas was a prophet, and in this respect more serviceable than Barnabas, who was no preacher ; and like Barnabas he was a man of good standing, since he was like Paul a Roman citizen (cf. xvi. 37). They set forth without an attendant, since Paul had one in view elsewhere.

And who was this ? The Apostle had friends at Lystra—a Jewish lady Eunice who dwelt there with her mother Lois and her young son Timothy (cf. 2 Tim. i. 5). She was a widow, as the phrasing of the original suggests and several manuscripts expressly state ; and plainly she was well-to-do, since she seems to have entertained Paul and Barnabas when they visited the town in the course of the first mission, and St. Luke speaks of “ the gates ” of her house (cf. xiv. 13), indicating that, like Mary's at Jerusalem (cf. xii. 13), it was a considerable residence. But she had better than worldly wealth. Hers was indeed a mixed marriage, yet she had remained true to the Jewish faith and had nurtured her child therein, aided in her pious task by his grandmother Lois—her mother, not her mother-in-law, since she too was a devout Jewess (cf. 2 Tim. iii. 15). They had all received the Gospel, and the Apostle had marked the lad's fair promise (cf. 1 Tim. iv. 14) ; and now he takes him as his attendant in the room of John Mark.

It proved a happy choice, and Paul was the more inclined to it since it afforded him an immediate opportunity for openly defining his attitude toward the ceremonial law and thus reinforcing the decree of the Council which he was delivering to his churches, and so perchance healing the incipient breach between the Jewish and the Gentile believers. Himself a Jew, he venerated the ancient ordinances, and approved their continued observance so long as it was understood that salvation was by faith and faith alone. And thus it was neither a compromise nor a concession but a lesson in charity when, forasmuch as there was Jewish blood in Timothy's veins, the Apostle circumcised him in consideration of Jewish sensibilities.

MEETING OF EAST AND WEST

xvi. 6-10

6 *Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,*

7 *After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia : but the Spirit suffered them not.*

8 *And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.*

9 *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night ; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.*

10 *And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.*

THIS brief passage is the suggestive record of a momentous development, a supreme crisis not alone in the career of the Apostle but in the history of Christianity and the fortunes of the human race—nothing less than the passing of the Gospel from Asia to Europe, the arena of its future triumph.

It was not in the Apostle's thoughts when he set forth on his mission. His plan was that after retraversing his former route through southern Galatia from Derbe to Pisidian Antioch he should continue his progress westward along the Trade Route to its terminus at Ephesus, the capital of the Province of Asia. And so it is written (ver. 6) that "they made a missionary progress through the Phrygo-Galatic District"—the district of the imperial Province of Galatia formerly known as Phrygia (see exposition of xiii. 14). Thence they would have passed into the Province of Asia and, following the highway, would have travelled down the rich and prosperous valley cut by the streams of the Lycus and the Mæander, evangelising as they went its

famed cities of Colossæ, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Tralles, and Magnesia until they reached Ephesus. It was indeed a great enterprise, promising a rich harvest of evangelical achievement ; but God had another and still grander design, and “ they were hindered by the Spirit from speaking the Word in Asia.”

And what was the hindrance ? It is a misconstruction of scriptural language to suppose that it was a supernatural revelation (cf. exposition of xx. 3). It was nothing else than the Holy Spirit’s interpretation of God’s providential appointments, the guidance never denied to faithful souls amid adverse and perplexing circumstances. Picture the present situation. It would be the month of July when they set out from Pisidian Antioch on their progress westward ; and on approaching the valley of the Lycus Paul found himself exposed to the same peril which he had experienced just three years ago in the sweltering lowlands of Pamphylia. Indeed the peril was here greater ; for the valley was not merely sultry and enervating in mid-summer but teemed with hot springs, exhaling in some instances mephitic vapours, insomuch that there was a jesting epigram which recommended the water of Hierapolis to one who was tired of life and scrupled at hanging himself. Liable as he was to a recurrence of his malady, the Apostle durst not pass that way, adventuring not alone his life but—what he prized still more—his mission.

After his conversion “ the beloved physician ” abandoned his profession and devoted himself to the ministry of the Gospel, co-operating with his revered teacher until the latter’s martyrdom at Rome in the year 67 ; and though, after the manner of the sacred writers, he never mentions himself, on the later pages of his narrative he betrays his presence in the Apostle’s company by telling the story in the first person plural. Here this revealing touch appears (ver. 10), and the inference is plain. It was now, after three years’ proof of his faith, that he abandoned his home and his practice at Pisidian Antioch and fared forth with the missionaries. It would be his advice that deterred Paul from pursuing his prearranged itinerary, and therefore it is that he has written that they were “ hindered by the Holy Spirit from speaking the Word in Asia.” So he would reason,

insisting that the plain issue was a providential leading, a pointing of God's finger.

Whither should they now betake themselves? They turned northward and travelled through the wide and thinly peopled uplands till they came not "to" but "over against" the ancient country of Mysia now included in the imperial Province of Asia. Their purpose was to pass on thence into the northern Province of Bithynia on the Euxine or Black Sea; but on approaching thither they abandoned their design. It is written that (not simply "the Spirit" but) "the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not." And what may this mean? Bithynia lay remote from the busy world. It had little commerce, few towns, no thronging multitudes; and it is remarkable how, animated by "the Spirit of Jesus" who "had compassion on the multitude," the Apostle always sought the great cities where life was eager, minds alert, and hearts open to the message of salvation because the need thereof was felt. Bithynia was no fitting scene for the preaching of the Word, and they turned westward. Observe what is written here: not that "they made a missionary progress through Mysia," since neither did they find opportunity there, but that "they passed it by." They hastened through it till they reached Troas.

And there they found an opportunity beyond all their imagination. Troas, properly Alexandria Troas or Alexandria in the Troad—named Alexandria in honour of Alexander the Great and Troas to distinguish it from the greater Alexandria of northern Egypt—was a thriving seaport, one of the gateways of communication between East and West. It looked over the Ægean Sea toward Macedonia, the once famed kingdom of Philip and his son Alexander, the conqueror of the world; and its harbour was crowded with Greek ships and its market frequented by Greek merchants. It was the Apostle's first introduction to western civilisation; and it would be with more than curiosity that he surveyed those strangers as he brushed against them in the streets or after his wont engaged them in conversation. Their talk of the lands whence they had come would open before him a wide prospect, and would set him wondering if it might not be that in his wandering quest the

Lord had all the while been leading him thither. It is written that "a dream cometh through the multitude of business"; and it is no marvel that, as he slept, the Apostle dreamed. He dreamed, as the original has it, of "a certain man of Macedonia," one who in the course of that stirring day had especially interested him by reason of his responsiveness. The wistful face haunted his pillow, and he heard articulate the appeal of that hungry heart: "Cross over to Macedonia and" not merely "help" but "succour us," literally "run at our cry" (cf. Mk, ix. 22, where see exposition).

I. PHILIPPI (xvi. 11-40)

(1) *Conversion of Lydia*

xvi. 11-15

11 *Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis ;*

12 *And from thence to Philippi, which is *the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony : and we were in that city abiding certain days.*

13 *And on the †sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made ; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.*

14 *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us : whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.*

15 *And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.*

WHEREFORE should St. Luke have thought it worth while to mention that they "came with a straight course to Samothrace"? A glance at the map discovers the reason. On putting out from Troas and steering northward the ship presently came abreast of the mouth of the Hellespont (Dardanelles) ; and there she encountered a disturbance unique in the tideless Mediterranean and much remarked of old by poets like Lucretius and philosophers like Aristotle, Seneca, and Pliny—the strong current which, flowing out of the Euxine,

Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontick and the Hellespont.

* Or, *the first.*† Gr. *sabbath day.*

At other seasons it would have swept the ship off her course, and on escaping from it she would have borne up for Neapolis far to the westward of the islands of Imbros and Samothrace. Regularly, however, on July 11 the Etesian or Annual Winds started blowing from the west and steadily continued until September 14. They counteracted the westward set of the current, and a ship bound for Neapolis would pass Imbros and Samothrace on the port and, making the coast of Thrace, would work along to her destination with the aid of the land-breezes. Thus, when St. Luke mentions their "straight course to Samothracia," he indicates approximately the time of the passage. It was during the prevalence of the Etesian Winds, probably in the month of August.

They landed at the port of Neapolis, and thence travelled ten or twelve miles inland to the city of Philippi, famous of old as the scene of the battle which sealed the doom of the Roman Republic in 42 B.C. In commemoration hereof the Emperor Augustus settled his veterans there and raised it to the dignity of a Roman Colony. Thenceforth it had all the pride of its new status, aping the imperial city after the manner of the Roman Colonies. Its magistrates were styled "prætors" (cf. vers. 20, 22, 35, 36, 38) and their serjeants "lictors" (cf. vers. 35, 38). After the Roman conquest of Macedonia in 168 B.C. the country was divided into four "parts"; and though Amphipolis had hitherto ranked as "the chief city" of the eastern part, Philippi now, as St. Luke observes, claimed that prestige. Though as a station on the Egnatian Road, the imperial highway leading from the Hellespont through Thrace, Macedonia, and Illyricum to Dyrrachium on the Adriatic, a distance of over five hundred Roman miles, Philippi, was largely frequented by travellers and merchants, it had little commerce of its own and consequently few resident Jews, so few that there was no synagogue in the town, only an "oratory" or "place of prayer."

It would be a disappointment to the missionaries to find no synagogue where, after their wont on arriving at a strange city, they might introduce their message; and it is an indication of the insignificance of the Jewish community that, though "certain days" elapsed, they encountered no representative

thereof ere the Sabbath came round. See how they then proceeded. There was no synagogue, but there must be "a place of prayer," and they knew where to seek it. After the Jewish fashion it would be outside the town where water was available for ceremonial ablution; and so it is written according to the authentic text: "On the Sabbath Day we"—Luke himself, Paul and Silas, and Timothy—"went forth without the gate along a river"—the modern Anghista, variously denominated by the Greek writers of old Angites, Gangites, Gangas—"where we supposed there was a place of prayer." And so there was—probably not a building but, as a place of prayer often was, a quiet retreat in the open by the riverside.

They would recognise it by the resorting of the worshippers thither at the hour of prayer; and they joined the little company. "We sat down," says St. Luke, "and were talking to the women who had come together." Does this mean that there were no men in the assemblage? Rather is it an allusion to a social peculiarity of Macedonia which he repeatedly remarks (cf. xvii. 4, 12) and which would impress the missionaries on their first experience of it at Philippi—the freedom and indeed predominance which women there enjoyed and which is strikingly exemplified by ancient inscriptions where men are distinguished not by patronymics but by metronymics: "Sopatros the son of Cleopatra, Demetrius the son of Nicopolis, Taurus the son of Ammia." Moreover, it has to be considered that the appeal which the Jewish faith made at that period to earnest pagans throughout the Empire, was peculiarly potent with women, especially ladies of good station. So it was in Macedonia, where "the God-fearers" (see exposition of viii. 2) were largely the wives of official personages (cf. xvii. 4).

At Philippi, where Jews were few, the frequenters of the Place of Prayer would be mainly women of this sort. Such at all events was Lydia. She was, as St. Luke expressly states (ver. 14), not a Jewess but "a worshipper of God." Neither, though she had made her home at Philippi, was she a Macedonian. She belonged to Thyatira in the ancient country of Lydia, now merged in the imperial Province of Asia; and her name, though quite common as a woman's name, is significant

of racial attachment. Purple-dyeing was a Lydian industry, and her business at Philippi was the sale of purple fabrics. Evidently she was well-to-do, since she had a house large enough to entertain the Apostle and his company ; and it would seem, since no mention is made of her husband but only of " her household," that she was a widow. Observe that her conversion was no sudden or facile transformation. For it is written not merely that she " heard " but that she " was hearing " or " used to hear," suggesting that it was after much waiting on the Apostle's ministry and earnest attention to his reasoning that she was brought to decision. Once convinced she was whole-hearted in the confession of her faith. She invited them all four to make her house their home during their stay in the city, and with womanly grace she overcame their scruples by an irresistible argument. Their acceptance, she urged, would be a personal kindness, an evidence that they recognised the sincerity of her faith. Thus would she admit no excuse. " She constrained us " says St. Luke—a word which occurs in the New Testament only here and in his story of the two disciples at Emmaus (cf. Lk. xxiv. 29, where see exposition) who, when the Gracious Stranger " made as though He would have gone further," " constrained Him, saying, Abide with us."

(2) *Imprisonment of Paul and Silas*

xvi. 16-24

16 *And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit *of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying :*

17 *The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.*

18 *And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.*

19 *And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the †market-place unto the rulers,*

20 *And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,*

21 *And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.*

22 *And the multitude rose up together against them : and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.*

23 *And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely :*

24 *Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.*

LYDIA was the first European Christian, and her conversion was an exceeding gain. It established the Gospel in Philippi ; for not only did her character and standing commend her example but her spacious house served as a meeting-place for the ever-increasing company of believers (cf. ver. 40). Thus bravely the work proceeded, the building

* Or, of Python.

† Or, court.

up of a church which, as his epistle to the Philippians ten years later testifies, remained the Apostle's comfort and pride.

It smoothed his path that there were no jealous Jews at Philippi to assail his doctrine; yet in course of time trouble arose from another quarter, the sort of trouble which, as experience proved, was inevitable in a Gentile community. The pagan mind was hospitable to new ideas; but wherever the Gospel interfered with worldly gain, it incurred angry opposition. So it by and by befell at Ephesus (cf. xix. 23-28), and so it now befalls at Philippi.

Where religion decays, superstition flourishes; and in faithless heathendom, even as dignitaries like Sergius Paulus (cf. xiii. 6-12) had their astrologers, so the vulgar had their fortune-tellers of a lower order. At Philippi in those days there was a company of charlatans who drove a lucrative trade. They possessed a singularly qualified fortune-teller or, in Scottish phrase, *spaewife*, described by St. Luke, according to the true rendering of the original, as "a crazy slave-girl, a ventriloquist." Since her frenzied utterances seemed to the ignorant populace supernatural oracles, "she brought her masters much gain by soothsaying." It is an evidence of the stir which the missionaries had made in the city that their fame had penetrated her disordered mind; and one day, as they were on their way, not "to prayer," but "to the place of prayer" (cf. ver. 13) she followed them, acclaiming them "slaves of the Most High God." Not merely was it an unpleasant experience but it was likely to harm their ministry by associating it in the popular opinion with that odious charlatanry; and Paul put a stop to it by curing her of her madness or, as the phrase of the time was (see exposition of Mt. viii. 28), casting out the spirit which possessed her.

Her masters were indignant. They seized Paul and Silas and "dragged them into the marketplace unto the rulers"—a realistic touch, since in a Greek or Roman town the law-court like other public offices was situated in the marketplace. They were astute rascals. Their real grievance was the damage to their business, but this would hardly have been considered by the magistrates, who would rather have applauded the poor

girl's healing. And so, knowing the men they had to do with, they gave the affair a political turn and represented the accused as Jewish strangers who, after the manner of their disloyal race, were interfering with the Roman customs of their good town. Remember that Philippi was a Roman colony, and its magistrates or "prætors" as they styled themselves had all the ridiculous self-importance which made the Roman colonies the jest of satirists.

Man, proud man,
Drest in a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep ; who, with our spleens,
Would all themselves laugh mortal.

The very mention of interference with their Roman customs struck them with horror, all the more that just a few months ago the Jews had been banished from the imperial capital (cf. xviii. 2), and doubtless these were refugees bent on prosecuting their seditious propaganda at Philippi. They did not stay to inquire but tore off the culprits' garments and had them bound to the whipping-post and severely beaten—properly "beaten with rods" (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 25), the rods of their "serjeants" or, as the word is in the original (vers. 35, 38), "lictors." Then they handed them over to the jailor with strict injunctions to imprison them closely. The order was obeyed. The prisoners were consigned to the inmost cell of the underground dungeon (cf. ver. 34) ; and, to make assurance double sure, they were put in the stocks—a wooden frame, sometimes with five openings enclosing neck, hands, and feet, but generally, as in this instance, only two for the feet.

(3) *Their Release*

xvi. 25-40

25 *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God : and the prisoners heard them.*

26 *And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken : and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.*

27 *And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.*

28 *But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm : for we are all here.*

29 *Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,*

30 *And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?*

31 *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

32 *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.*

33 *And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes ; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*

34 *And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.*

35 *And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.*

36 *And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go : now therefore depart, and go in peace.*

37 *But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison ; and*

now do they thrust us out privily ? nay verily ; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

38 *And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates : and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.*

39 *And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.*

40 *And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia : and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.*

THOUGH less brutal than scourging (see exposition of Mt. xxvii. 27-30), beating with rods was a sore ordeal ; and betwixt the smarting of their wounds and the cramping of the stocks there was no sleep for the prisoners that night. But for them as for Samuel Rutherford the dungeon was "Christ's palace." They comforted themselves with prayer, and about midnight they lifted up their voices in a hymn of praise. In that cage of crime it would be nothing unusual for the stillness of the night to be broken by groans and curses ; but "the voice of rejoicing and salvation" sounded strangely there, and the inmates of the neighbouring cells were listening in astonishment when their astonishment was turned to consternation by a happening frequent in Macedonia—an earthquake, shaking the very foundations of the prison. The doors of the cells burst open, and the prisoners' shackles, riveted to the walls, dropped from the gaping masonry. By Roman law the jailor was answerable for the safe keeping of his charge ; and when he rushed down and saw the cells open, he supposed that his prisoners had escaped and, like a true Roman preferring death to disgrace, he would have despatched himself with his sword had not Paul's reassurance stayed his hand.

Thus far it is all natural and intelligible, but see what follows. The jailor "called for" not "a light" but "lights" ; and when the warders arrived with their cressets, he ascertained that the prisoners were indeed "all there," and first, says the Codex Bezae, "having made the rest fast," he sprang into the cell of Paul and Silas, and all of a tremble bowed before them and

brought them forth. "Sirs," he cried, "what must I do to be saved?" It seems strange that he should thus suddenly be transformed into a humble and anxious seeker after salvation; but consider the situation. For several months now the missionaries had been busy at Philippi, and their Gospel was the talk of the town. Their constant theme was "salvation"; and if it had gripped even the crazed slave-girl (cf. ver. 17), would it be lost upon the jailor? He must have heard them preaching in the marketplace at his very door; and evidently his heart had been touched. Not without misgiving would he receive the prisoners from the lictors and execute upon them the prætors' stern mandate; and when the earthquake awoke him at dead of night, his heathen soul would be shaken with superstitious dread. No wonder he fell at their feet and put to them his vexing question "What must I do to be saved?"

There, in the gloomy corridor of the dungeon lit by the flickering torches, Paul and Silas proclaimed "the Way of Salvation" to the jailor and his warders and his family. Never was there a stranger meeting-place, a stranger assemblage, or a more blessed result. Their rude jailor was now their kindly host. As they washed him in "the laver of regeneration" (cf. Tit. iii. 5 R.V. marg.), so he washed their wounds; and he not merely "brought them" but "brought them up"—up from the underground dungeon—"into his house, and," since it was now morning, "set" not merely "meat" but "a table before them" or, as Wycliffe has it, "sette to them a borde." They would all take their places round it; and it was more than a breakfast. Like every meal sanctified by faith and love, it was a communion feast.

Meanwhile what had been passing outside the prison? The narrative here is amplified by the Codex Bezaë with a picturesqueness and an appreciation of the humour of the situation which stamp its additions as surely authentic reminiscences. "Now on the break of day the prætors came together with the same view to the marketplace (cf. ver. 19), and with the earthquake which had occurred in their remembrance they were afraid, and they sent the lictors with a message: 'Release those men whom thou receivedst yesterday.' " Evidently on reflection they had

recognised the illegality of their procedure in beating and imprisoning the missionaries without examination. They had gone to rest with uneasy minds, and the earthquake had aggravated their misgiving with superstitious alarm. The business of the law-court began early (see exposition of Mt. xxvii. 11), and when they met, they had all made up their minds that their rash decision should be rescinded. The company was still at table when the lictors presented themselves at the jailor's door and summoned him forth to receive the mandate. "And," continues the story, "the jailor came in and reported their words to Paul: 'The prætors have sent a message that ye be released. Now therefore depart and go your way.'"

Observe the implication here. Already, regardless of personal consequences, he would fain have set them at liberty, but they would not avail themselves of his generosity. No longer need they hesitate. "Now therefore depart and go your way." Still Paul refused. He would not let the magistrates off so easily. Their indiscretion was more serious than they were yet aware. For Paul and Silas, though Jews, both held the proud distinction of Roman citizenship—an honour which, though in later days it might be purchased, was originally conferred in recognition of public merit. In Paul's case at any rate it was inherited (cf. xxii. 28); and it may be that each of them had an ancestor among those Jews who were carried captive to Rome by Cn. Pompeius the Great after his conquest of Jerusalem in 63 B.C., and were afterwards settled beyond the Tiber as a free community. Be this as it may, the Roman citizenship was no empty honour, since it exempted the bearer from ignominious punishments and entitled him in case of miscarriage of justice to appeal to the Emperor's judgment (cf. xxv. 10-12).

It was thus a grave outrage that the magistrates had committed. They had not known indeed that the missionaries were Roman citizens, but they would have been apprised thereof had they accorded them a hearing. It was right that they should be taught a lesson. "Though innocent," was Paul's answer to the lictors' message, "they beat us publicly uncondemned, being Roman citizens, and cast us into prison; and now they are for casting us out privately! No indeed, but let them come

themselves and bring us out.” They were indeed in a serious plight, and they made haste to humble themselves. “They arrived with many friends”—other dignitaries of the town—“at the prison and besought them to depart. ‘We were ignorant of your case,’ they said, ‘that you were righteous men.’ And they brought them out and besought them, saying: ‘Depart from this city, lest they again beset us, clamouring against you,’ ” thus feebly essaying to cast the blame on the unruly rabble (cf. ver. 22).

The missionaries treated them with cool disdain, and instead of quitting the town forthwith they went home to Lydia’s house and bade farewell to their assembled converts. It was not mere bravado ; for they had much to do ere taking their departure. Especially were they concerned for the continuance of the work at Philippi and the fostering of the Church so happily instituted there ; and forasmuch as the first personal narration here ceases for a space, it appears that Luke remained to minister thereto and spread the Gospel in the neighbourhood.

2. THESSALONICA AND BERÆA

xvii. 1-15

1 *Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews :*

2 *And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,*

3 *Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead ; and that this Jesus, *whom I preach unto you, is Christ.*

4 *And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas ; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.*

5 *But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.*

6 *And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also ;*

7 *Whom Jason hath received : and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.*

8 *And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.*

9 *And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.*

10 *And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea : who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.*

11 *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that*

* Or, whom, said he, I preach.

they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

12 Therefore many of them believed ; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea : but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens : and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

IT was the month of August, 50 A.D., when they arrived at Philippi, and in view of all that they accomplished there it would be about the close of the year when they took their departure—Paul and Silas and their attendant Timothy. They travelled westward along the Egnatian Road. Three and thirty miles from Philippi they came to Amphipolis and thirty miles further on to Apollonia, but since these were inconsiderable towns with no Jewish communities and no synagogues where they might introduce their message, they stayed at neither but held on some seven and thirty miles farther to Thessalonica (*Salonica*), the principal city of Macedonia, known of old as Therma and situated at the head of an arm of the sea named after it the Thermaic Gulf. It was, like Athens, a democracy, and its magistrates were denominated politarchs or “rulers of the city” (cf. vers. 6, 8).

There was no lack of Jews in Thessalonica, and the missionaries found a lodging with one named Jason, representing in Greek the Hebrew Jesus or Joshua. After his wont wherever there was a Jewish community, Paul opened his mission in the synagogue, reasoning there “for three Sabbaths” or rather “weeks” (cf. Lk. xviii. 12 ; Jo. xx. 1), not only at the two services each Sabbath Day but at the services on the Monday and Thursday of each week (see exposition of Mt. iv. 23–25). Observe his method, so appropriate to a Jewish audience : “He reasoned with them from the Scriptures, opening”—either

“opening the Scriptures,” discovering their hidden meaning, or “opening their understanding” (cf. Lk. xxiv. 32, 45)—“and alleging”—not simply “asserting” but, in the old sense of the word, “proving by quotations.” And the thesis which he thus demonstrated was twofold : (1) “It was necessary that the Christ (the Messiah) should suffer and rise again from the dead” (cf. Lk. xxiv. 26, 27) ; and (2) “The Christ is this man (cf. ix. 20, 22)—Jesus whom I am proclaiming unto you.” “Look here,” said he, “upon this picture, and on this : do you not recognise them as one and the same ? ”

It was indeed a compelling argument, and one which abides evermore unshaken, demonstrating as it does how all the long dreamings and yearnings of the children of men find their fulfilment and satisfaction in Christ. Yet it is curious that its appeal was largely lost upon the Jews of that period, forasmuch as they had forgotten their Scriptures' foreshadowings of a suffering Messiah, despised and rejected of men, and were looking for a national deliverer, “a king to slay their foes and lift them high.” Hence the Cross was a stumbling-block to them, and it was not “necessary” but incredible in their judgment “that the Christ should suffer.” The Gentiles, on the other hand, were free from the prejudice of a false ideal ; and so it came to pass that, whereas of the Jews “some” and only some “were persuaded” by the Apostle's argument, it went home to the “God-fearers” (cf. viii. 2) in his audience. These were numerous at Thessalonica, and his argument gripped them. It met their need, revealing to them a full satisfaction of their souls' hunger.

These were the rich harvest of the three weeks' ministry in the synagogue—“a large throng of the devout Greeks and of the wives of the chief men not a few.” Observe the significance of this the proper rendering of the original. Since the Jewish faith was specially attractive to religiously disposed ladies of good estate, there were many such among the God-fearers in the city and by reason of the singular freedom which women enjoyed in Macedonia, they were largely influential.

It was very natural that the Jews should wax jealous ; for the God-fearers were generous contributors to religious and

charitable causes (cf. x. 2, 4; Lk. vii. 5), and they were loath to lose them. Evidently the missionaries were excluded from the synagogue; but now that they had obtained a hearing in the city, this mattered little, and their continued success exasperated the Jews. From the letter which the Apostle wrote to his converts after his flight from the city, it appears that some time elapsed ere he was assailed, long enough for the formation of an organised congregation (cf. 1 Th. v. 12, 13) and long enough for the depletion of his purse insomuch that he had to work for his daily bread (cf. 1 Th. ii. 9) and was repeatedly indebted to the generosity of his friends at Philippi (cf. Phil. iv. 16). It was the beginning of January when he arrived at Thessalonica, and from the sequel it would seem that it was May when he was driven thence.

See how it came about. Having no jurisdiction beyond their synagogue, the Jews plotted to embroil the missionaries with the populace. And a foul plot it was. Who were those "lewd (in the old sense of "ignorant," "rude") fellows of the baser sort" whom they took unto them? The original is literally "certain evil men of the market-placers"—the *lazzaroni* of the city, idle rascals who loafed about the market-place, the "circumforanean rogues" of Burton's *Anatomy* or, in Shakespeare's phrase, "the hangman boys in the market-place." Of these the Jews got hold and incited them to raise a riot, directing them to beset Jason's house and bring his guests out "unto the people," that is, to the popular assembly where, like Socrates at Athens, they would have been at the mercy of any demagogue. It happened fortunately that the missionaries were employed elsewhere, but the rioters would not be baulked. They seized Jason and some Christians whom they encountered, and dragged them before the Politarchs. And what was the charge which, schooled by the Jews, they preferred against them? It was a charge of treason. "These men," they vociferated, "the subverters of (not "the world" but) the Empire (cf. Lk. ii. 1, where see exposition), have come here also." The notorious propaganda had reached their own city, and it was time to take action. But, the Politarchs might inquire, where were the propagandists? It was not the missionaries that were arraigned but

several peaceable citizens. "Jason," explained the accusers, "hath received them (cf. Lk. x. 38, xix. 6), and these"—indicating the others—"all are acting in defiance of the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another King—Jesus." The special point of the charge is that in his preaching at Thessalonica the Apostle had dwelt much on the blessed hope of the Lord's coming again in glory to judge the world and establish His Kingdom (cf. 1 Th. i. 9, 10); and this, as they construed it, meant the overthrow of the Empire.

Evidently the Politarchs, instructed doubtless in their own homes regarding the true aims of the missionaries (cf. ver. 4), were well aware of the flimsiness of the charge; but in "a free democracy" it was perilous to thwart the rabble, and they durst not simply dismiss the case. See what they did. They "took security of Jason and the rest"—not for the production of the missionaries to stand their trial, since then the latter would not have stolen away, leaving their friends to pay the penalty, but for their orderly behaviour. And here the Jews had their opportunity. Thwarted for the moment, they had only to excite a fresh riot. And therefore for their own sake and the sake of their sureties Paul and Silas must quit the city.

They took their departure forthwith, only waiting till night-fall to escape observation. Still holding westward, they diverged from the Egnatian Road and travelled some forty miles to Berœa, a considerable town pleasantly situated under the shadow of Mount Bermius. Observe what is written: "The brethren sent forth Paul and Silas unto Berœa: who"—not Paul and Silas but the brethren—"on arriving at the synagogue of the Jews went away." That is to say, their converts, loath to let them go, not merely saw them off from Thessalonica but escorted them all the way to Berœa and only bade them farewell when they had conducted them to the synagogue. Thus introduced, they were graciously received. And it was no mere passing courtesy. For it is written that the Jews at Berœa were "more noble" than those at Thessalonica; and the word, signifying properly "well-born" (cf. Lk. xix. 12; 1 Cor. i. 26), had already in those days acquired something of the meaning which it bears in Modern Greek—"well-mannered," "polite," "gentlemanly."

Perhaps the difference of disposition was due, in some measure, to the diverse conditions of a peaceful inland town and a rough sea-port on a commercial highway; but St. Luke alleges a deeper reason. "You may depend upon it," says Coleridge, "religion is, in its essence, the most gentlemanly thing in the world"; and this it was that made the Berœan Jews more gentlemanly, more generous, more fair-minded than their Thessalonian neighbours. So assured was their faith that they had no fear of new truth; and they not simply "welcomed the Word with all readiness of mind." They would not hastily reject it, and neither would they lightly accept it. They would determine its truth by ascertaining whether it accorded with the testimony of their revered Scriptures. And see the result. "Many of them believed." And not they alone but—so runs the original—"of the Greek women, wives of the men of honourable estate, and their husbands not a few." These ladies were God-fearers, and they brought their husbands with them into the faith of the Gospel.

It was a signal triumph, but it was presently interrupted. Paul's escape from Thessalonica had chagrined his enemies there. Since he had stolen away under cover of night, they knew not whither he had gone; but by and by they heard tidings of his doings at Berœa, and they hastened thither and denounced him as a fugitive treasonmonger. As at Thessalonica they incited the rabble, "there also," according to the authentic text, "stirring up and troubling the crowds." The word for "stirring up" signifies properly "tossing," as the surge tosses a ship—the word, be it observed, which the Apostle soon afterwards employed when, referring to those very mischief-makers, he warned his Thessalonian converts against being "tossed away from their judgment" (2 Th. ii. 2) as a ship is swept from her moorings.

Thus vividly St. Luke depicts the situation at Berœa. Paul was the object of the popular fury, and he was saved by the resourcefulness of his converts. They conveyed him out of the town, "to go as it were to the sea," as though meaning to embark him at Methone. It would have been easy for his enemies to follow thither and arrest him ere he could set sail; but the movement was only a feint, and once clear of the town his escort

turned southward and conveyed him overland to Athens. Another reading is "to go as far as to the sea," suggesting that he actually embarked and travelled by ship to Athens; but the Codex Bezae is explicit. They travelled overland through Thessaly: "but he passed by (cf. xvi. 8) Thessaly; for he was hindered from preaching the Word among them." The ancient country of Thessaly was in those days included in the imperial Province of Macedonia, and since the journey was a hasty flight, they never drew breath until they had passed its frontier and entered the Province of Achaia, where beyond the Macedonian jurisdiction the Apostle was secure from arrest. In any case, whether by sea or by land, his friends escorted him all the way to Athens. And there they left him and, returning to Berœa, informed Silas and Timothy whither they had conveyed him.

3. ATHENS

xvii. 16-34

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city **wholly given to idolatry.*

17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them, that met with him.

18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this †babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

19 And they took him, and brought him unto ‡Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?

20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.

21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of §Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your ||devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

* Or, full of idols.

† Or, base fellow.

‡ Or, Mars' hill. It was the highest court in Athens.

§ Or, the court of the Areopagites.

|| Or, gods that ye worship.

26 *And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation ;*

27 *That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us :*

28 *For in him we live, and move, and have our being ; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.*

29 *Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.*

30 *And the times of this ignorance God winked at ; but now commandeth all men every where to repent :*

31 *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained ; whereof he hath *given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

32 *And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked : and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.*

33 *So Paul departed from among them.*

34 *Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed : among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.*

IT was the month of May, 51 A.D., when the missionaries came to Berœa, and probably, in view of all that happened, it would be toward the close of July when Paul quitted it ; and since Athens was upwards of two hundred miles off, it would be August when he arrived there. Since it would take quite a week for his escort to return to Berœa and as long again for Silas and Timothy to travel thence to Athens, he was a full fortnight anxiously awaiting their arrival. Eager as he was for tidings of the situation in Macedonia and hoping to learn that the storm had blown over and he might return thither and resume his interrupted ministry (cf. 1 Th. ii. 17, 18), he had meanwhile no thought of inaugurating a mission at Athens ; yet he did not

* Or, offered faith.

pass the time idly. It was his first visit to that city of ancient and enduring renown, the home of wisdom, art, and poetry ; traditionally reputed, moreover, the most religious of cities, and in that age, when the old faiths were a-dying, no less hospitable than imperial Rome to foreign cults. And here lay his peculiar interest. Everywhere, as he curiously explored the beautiful city, he was confronted by moving evidences of her people's yearning after God ; and " his spirit smarted within him, when he beheld the city full of idols "—" smarted " like a sore wound when roughly handled (see exposition of xv. 39).

One sight there was which specially moved him—an altar bearing the inscription TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. The story is that once of old Athens was visited by a plague ; and when the people's supplications to all the gods they knew proved unavailing, they sought counsel of Epimenides, the Cretan poet and sage and prophet (cf. Tit. i. 12). He came to the stricken city and, getting sheep both black and white, brought them to Mars' Hill and thence let them stray whither they would, directing that wherever each might rest, it should there be sacrificed " to the fitting god." Thus, it was said, the plague was stayed ; and thenceforth in every Attic township or parish there stood " nameless altars," lest perchance, when due honour had been paid to all the known gods, others unknown might remain unpropitiated. It was a pathetic evidence of the heathen world's destitution ; and what wonder that it wrung the Apostle's heart and moved him to tell Athens of the Gospel which, on her own unwitting confession, she so deeply needed ?

Nor did he lack opportunity. " He reasoned (cf. ver. 3) " not only " in the synagogue with the Jews and the Devout " but " in the marketplace daily with those who chanced to be there." And these were a singularly receptive audience. For not merely was the marketplace at Athens a common resort but the philosophers were wont to discourse there, and the sharp-witted citizens engaged there in the discussion of all manner of questions, political, metaphysical, and religious (cf. ver. 21), and they would lend a ready ear to the novel teaching of the Apostle. He was thus employed, as appears from his first epistle to the Thessalonians, when Silas and Timothy arrived

from Berea. They brought him disappointing tidings. So far was the trouble from subsiding that the Jews who had pursued him thence to Berea had returned to Thessalonica and were harassing his converts there (cf. 1 Th. ii. 14-16). He would fain have hastened thither for their encouragement, but his appearance in their midst would have aggravated the trouble. And so it was decided that Silas and Timothy should betake themselves to Macedonia and watch developments and bring him word of the issue. The latter, too insignificant to incur the hostility of the persecutors, was commissioned to Thessalonica (cf. iii. 1-6); while Silas apparently betook himself to Philippi, whither the trouble had not extended, and whence by and by he brought back needful supplies, betokening the sympathy of that ever faithful and generous church (cf. Ac. xviii. 5; Phil. iv. 15).

Thus the Apostle was "left at Athens alone" (cf. 1 Th. iii. 1). He continued his ministry, especially in the marketplace; and so keen was the popular interest that the philosophers took alarm. It was a menace at once to their prestige and to their emoluments; and for the nonce they forgot their differences and united against the common danger. A band of them, representing the rival schools of the Epicureans and the Stoics, interposed. Some of them affected disdain. They called him "a babbler," and the word in the original is picturesque. It was an Athenian slang-word. Literally "a seed-picker," it properly denoted a bird which picked up the seed which the sower scattered on the field (cf. Mt. xiii. 4); and so (1) a thievish rascal who lived on what he could pick up, "a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles" like Shakespeare's Autolycus, or (2) an intellectual charlatan, a retailer of borrowed and ill digested ideas, a pretentious dabbler, "the picker-up of learning's crumbs" like Browning's Karshish. It is the latter sense that the word bears here. "What," they asked, "would this sciolist, this picker-up of learning's crumbs, wish to say?" Others again took a graver view. "He seemeth," said they, "to be a proclaimer of strange divinities." And their reason was that he preached of "Jesus and resurrection." The Greek for "resurrection" is *anastasis*, and this in their dull pedantry they mistook for a

feminine proper name like Anastasia and conceived him as propounding the cult of a pair of deities, Jesus and Anastasis, after the manner of the Egyptian Osiris and Isis. So true it is that "the gretteste clerkes been noght the wysest men," and "an Athenian blockhead is the worst of all blockheads."

The proclamation of strange divinities was a serious offence—the very offence which had been laid to the charge of Socrates just three and a half centuries ago. And it was aggravated in Paul's case inasmuch as the novel worship which he was seeking to introduce was, as his accusers construed it, an Oriental glorification of sexuality. There was a court at Athens charged with the office of religious and moral censorship—the ancient and reverend court of the Areopagus, the Hill of Ares, the God of War, the Latin Mars; and there the Apostle was arraigned.

The Areopagus was an open court, and when he was called to make his defence, his soul kindled at the sight of the assemblage which thronged it. He forgot his judges. "Athenians," he began; and his speech was less a refutation of the charge on which he stood arraigned than a skilful and impassioned appeal to the yearnings of those heathen hearts. Our Version misses the spirit which animated him when it makes him upbraid them at the outset as "too superstitious." The word of the original signified properly "religious"; and though in later days when the ancient faiths were scorned, it acquired the evil sense of "superstitious," it still retained its proper meaning, and on the Apostle's lips it was a recognition of the city's old and just renown as "the citadel of the Gods, the defender of the altars of the Greeks, the delight of Heaven." "Athenians," he says, "at every turn your exceptional religiousness is before my eyes." It had been brought home to him during his sojourn among them when, "as he passed through their city and inspected their sacred institutions," he lighted on that "nameless altar." And the inscription thereon he makes the basis of his argument. He was "a proclaimer" not, as his accusers alleged, "of strange divinities" but of the God whom, on their own confession, they were feeling after in their heathen blindness. "What ye are worshipping without knowing it, this it is that I am 'proclaiming' unto you."

Even as in reasoning with the Jews he was wont to make appeal to their Scriptures, so here he deftly commends his argument to a Greek audience by appealing to the testimonies of their philosophers and poets. The Epicureans taught that the gods dwelt serene, "exempt from all pain, exempt from perils, strong in their own wealth, needing naught of us," and it was a saying of Pythagoras that "one who honours God as though He needed anything, unwittingly deems himself to be greater than God"; and hence the Apostle demonstrates the irrationality of the pagan worship. Next he adduces the Stoic idea of Providence. And then he crowns his argument by declaring that the unknown God whom his hearers were feeling after, was in truth "not far off from each one of them," quoting the testimony of two of their Greek poets. One was the Cretan Epimenides, who had written that "in Him we live and move and have our being," and another a countryman of his own Aratus of Soli in Cilicia who, discoursing in a noble passage of divine omnipresence, had written: "For we are also His offspring."

Thus far he held his audience, even the learned judges, the Areopagites as they were styled; but see what happened when he applied his argument, telling how "the unknown God" had manifested Himself in Jesus and approved Him the Saviour and Judge of the world by raising Him from the dead. His reference to "the resurrection, the *anastasis* of the dead" transformed the scene by revealing what his preaching of "Jesus and Anastasis" meant and how egregiously his accusers had blundered. The quick-witted spectators would appreciate the absurdity, but it was not they that "mocked," since there was a stringent law prohibiting laughter or applause in the august court. It was the judges that mocked, sneering not at Paul's doctrine but at the simplicity of his prosecutors, those pompous philosophers; while the latter awkwardly covered their confusion by promising further investigation.

Thus the case was laughed out of court; yet the Apostle's appeal was not wholly unavailing. It won some of his audience, and two of these are mentioned by name. One was a distinguished personage—Dionysius the Areopagite. Though

invested later with legendary celebrity, he never again appears in the sacred narrative ; and it may be that the reason why he is named here is not merely that he was a person of consequence but that St. Luke heard from his lips the story which he so picturesquely and intimately narrates. And what of the woman named Damaris ? Nothing is recorded of her but her name, but this is significant. It is a variant of Damalis, which means " a heifer " ; and since it was an Athenian fashion for courtesans to go by such nicknames—as Melissa, " Bee," Aix, " Goat," Hys, " Pig "—and since, moreover, modest women were secluded from public assemblies, it would seem that she belonged to that unhappy class. Her express mention is a testimony that she honourably redeemed her shameful past. She was another Magdalene.

4. CORINTH

xviii. 1-17

1 *After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth ;*

2 *And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla ; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome :) and came unto them.*

3 *And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought : for by their occupation they were tentmakers.*

4 *And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.*

5 *And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus *was Christ.*

6 *And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads ; I am clean : from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.*

7 *And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.*

8 *And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house ; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.*

9 *Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace :*

10 *For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee : for I have much people in this city.*

11 *And he †continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.*

* Or, is *the* Christ.

† Gr. sat there.

12 *And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,*

13 *Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.*

14 *And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you :*

15 *But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it ; for I will be no judge of such matters.*

16 *And he drave them from the judgment seat.*

17 *Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.*

IT was the beginning of September, 51, when after a month's sojourn there Paul "departed from Athens"; and it is significant that the same word is used in the next verse of the "departure" of the Jews from Rome when they were banished thence in the previous year. The suggestion is that his departure also was compulsory, and what the compulsion was is revealed in a reminiscent passage of his letter to the Corinthians some four years and a half later (1 Cor. ii. 1-5). It was twofold.

(1) The ludicrous issue of his arraignment before the court of the Areopagus. It was indeed on his prosecutors that the ridicule had fallen, yet it touched him too, since the mirthful citizens would nevermore listen seriously to a doctrine which had been so absurdly misconstrued. And he recognised that he had himself contributed to the luckless dénouement by adopting the rôle of a Greek rhetorician. His commission as an Apostle of the Lord was to testify of Him in all simplicity, proclaiming His sacrificial death and His glorious resurrection; and, forgetting this, he had essayed a philosophic disquisition. It had proved a dire blunder, and he vowed that never would he repeat it. Nevermore would he employ the meretricious aids of "excellency of speech or of wisdom" in "proclaiming

the testimony of God." He would know nothing save "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" and trust not to "enticing words of man's wisdom" but to "the demonstration of the Spirit."

(2) He fell sick. Most likely it was a recurrence of the malady which had stricken him in Pamphylia and thenceforth afflicted him all his days (cf. xiii. 13, 14, where see exposition); and no wonder though it seized him now, enfeebled as he was by his tribulation in Macedonia and vexed with anxiety and self-upbraiding. He must escape from the scene of his discomfiture; and he betook himself to the neighbouring city of Corinth "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling."

It was his good fortune to encounter at Corinth two strangers who succoured him in his present need and not only remained his true friends all the rest of his days but, humble folk though they were, greatly served the cause of the Gospel—a Jew named Aquila and his wife Priscilla. Aquila belonged originally to Pontus on the Black Sea, but he had migrated to Rome where, it would seem from her Latin name, his wife belonged. A year ago their home there had been broken up by the decree banishing all the Jews from the imperial capital, and they had recently settled at Corinth. Already, indeed ever since the memorable Day of Pentecost (cf. ii. 10), there was a community of Jewish Christians at Rome, and Aquila and Priscilla had belonged thereto, since they were evidently Christians when the Apostle met them. And see how they came together. He must earn his livelihood at Corinth; and here he experienced the advantage of the wise Jewish ordinance that every lad, even one destined to the Rabbinical office, should be taught an honest trade. Tentmaking was a thriving industry at Tarsus, and young Saul had learned it. And now he turned to it in his need. Aquila was a tentmaker and was plying his craft at Corinth, and when the Apostle applied to him, not only did he set him to work but he and his good wife, pitying his plight, gave him lodging in their house.

Just as at Athens, so at Corinth he did not embark on a serious mission, since he did not mean to stay there. He was waiting for Silas and Timothy in the hope that they would bring

him word that the way was clear for his return to Macedonia. And indeed it was impossible for him meanwhile to devote himself to the task of evangelising the city ; for he was busy with his tentmaking. Yet such opportunities as he had he faithfully improved. Several weeks elapsed, and "every Sabbath" or rather "Sabbath after Sabbath," as each came round bringing rest from daily toil, "he would reason in the synagogue." Here Beza's Manuscript has an illuminating addition : "he would reason in the synagogue, introducing also the name of the Lord Jesus"—merely telling the congregation about Him. And moreover "he sought to persuade not only Jews but also Greeks" ; which means that, besides reasoning in the synagogue each Sabbath Day, he talked with all whom he encountered, particularly his fellow craftsmen, whether Jews or Greeks.

He was thus employed when in the month of October Silas and Timothy appeared. The former came from Philippi, whither he had gone to take counsel with Luke and the other friends there ; and he was accompanied by several of these, deputed to convey to the Apostle not merely an assurance of sympathy but a supply of money (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 9). Less cheering by far was Timothy's report. He came from Thessalonica, and he told how not only was the enmity of the Jews still unabated but trouble had risen within the Church over the question of the Second Advent. And he brought a letter from the Church's leaders, soliciting advice.

These tidings quenched the Apostle's hope of an immediate resumption of his Macedonian ministry. And see what he did. First of all, in answer to their communication, he wrote his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, and commissioned Timothy to convey it to its destination. And then, recognising the providential purpose of his exclusion from Macedonia, he addressed himself to the evangelisation of Corinth. Observe what is written. He "was" not "pressed in spirit" but "constrained by the Spirit." It is "the love of Christ" that "constraineth us" (2 Cor. v. 14), and when the Holy Spirit laid home to the Apostle's heart the sore need of that sinful city, he must needs testify thereof.

Then with a rush the intolerable craving
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-call,—
Oh to save these ! to perish for their saving,
Die for their life, be offered for them all !

So runs the received text, but the best authorities have another reading, less attractive at the first glance yet more significant and more illuminative of the situation : " Paul was held fast by the Word." Absolved by the bounty of the ever generous Philippians from the necessity of winning a livelihood, he laid aside the implements of his tentmaking and devoted his time and strength without distraction to the ministry of the Word. He began in the synagogue, no longer merely " introducing the name of the Lord Jesus " but " solemnly testifying that the Christ (Messiah) was Jesus " (cf. xvii. 2).

See how his argument was received. Prejudiced by the example of their Thessalonian confrères, they would have none of it. " They ranged themselves against it and," unable to refute it, " blasphemed," pouring insult, in Jewish fashion, on the Crucified, and all the more bitterly that two noted personages among them confessed their faith—Crispus the ruler of their synagogue and a " God-fearer " Justus or, as he is fully designated by some authorities, Titius Justus, evidently from his Latin name a Roman and probably, like so many of his class, an official of the imperial government. It was useless to continue the argument, and Paul withdrew, not without a dignified protest. " He shook out his raiment "—a dramatic gesture which signified of old even as to this day in the East a repudiation of responsibility, a declinature of further intercourse (cf. Neh. v. 13).

His abandonment of the synagogue was no disadvantage to the Apostle's ministry, since it had already served his turn by introducing his message to the city, and another meeting-place was now available—the commodious residence of Justus. Thither he betook himself with his company of converts, and the work went on apace inasmuch as the new meeting-place was open to all and sundry, Gentiles as well as Jews. It proved, however, a serious embarrassment that the house adjoined the synagogue. For the sight of the Christians passing their door

and trooping in ever larger numbers into the rival meeting-place exasperated the Jews and fanned the flame of their hostility.

It was at this juncture that Timothy returned from Thessalonica with tidings so disquieting that the Apostle was moved to despatch thither another epistle which incidentally reveals the gravity of his position at Corinth. "Brethren," he writes (2 Th. iii. 1, 2), "pray for us, that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men." It seemed as though his experience at Thessalonica would be repeated and he would be driven from Corinth; and St. Luke tells how he was heartened to endurance. It was night, and he had laid him down with a mind ill at ease, apprehensive of an assault upon his lodging (cf. xvii. 5). As he lay sleepless, a passage of Scripture came home to him—that cheering assurance of the prophet (Is. xli. 10, 11) beginning "Fear not, for I am with thee." It was the very word he needed, and it rallied his faith and courage. He be-thought himself of the success which despite opposition he had achieved, surely a foretaste of still greater. There was work for him to do in Corinth, and his argument was that he was immortal till his work was done. He thought no more of flight but girded himself to his ministry; and instead of closing ignominiously now after two brief months it had lasted no less than eighteen when at length he took his departure.

In truth he ran little risk of molestation, since Corinth, the Roman capital of the Province of Achaia, was the seat of the imperial Proconsul (cf. xiii. 7), and in a city strongly garrisoned and vigilantly administered the Jews, however ill disposed, hardly durst resort to open violence. It is an evidence of their habitual restraint that, when at the beginning of the proconsular year on July 1, 52 A.D., Junius Annæus Gallio entered on his office, they plucked up courage, thinking they had their opportunity. Gallio is chiefly distinguished as an elder brother of Annæus Seneca, the Stoic philosopher, who held him in affectionate esteem, dedicating to him two of his immortal writings—his treatises *On Anger* and *On the Happy Life*—and eulogising his excellent qualities, not least his gentleness and his amiability. Mistaking his sweetness for simplicity, the Jews thought to bend him to their will and arraigned Paul before him.

Whether it be that they confided in his simplicity or that they were less astute than the Jews at Thessalonica (cf. xvii. 6, 7) they took no pains to trick out their indictment in a political disguise but stated it baldly as a religious grievance, an offence against their Jewish Law ; and they quickly discovered how ill they had reckoned. The Proconsul was no weakling. He contemptuously ruled out the charge and dismissed them.

Odious as they were to their Gentile neighbours, their discomfiture delighted the spectators who thronged the court ; and as they retired, they were roughly handled. The crowd got hold of their leader Sosthenes, the successor of Crispus in the office of Ruler of the Synagogue, and soundly belaboured him. It was nothing serious but just the sort of horse-play that a crowd loves. It was richly deserved, and Gallio, who among his other qualities had the grace of humour, took no notice. He " cared for none of these things." It is a misunderstanding of the story that has made his name a byword for moral and religious indifference—" a lukewarm Laodicean, or an indifferent Gallio." See how it arose. Writing from Ephesus to the Church at Corinth over two years later, Paul employed one Sosthenes as his amanuensis (cf. 1 Cor. i. 1) ; and on the precarious assumption that he was none other than the personage who figures here, it was inferred that the latter, though designated " the ruler of the synagogue," was already, like Crispus, a Christian. And since for " all the Greeks " the best manuscripts have simply " they all took Sosthenes," it was supposed that it was the Jews who committed the outrage, avenging their discomfiture on their renegade ruler ; and Gallio, superbly disdainful of both factions, paid no heed. The truth is that Sosthenes was no uncommon name, and the Corinthian ruler of the synagogue was a different person from the Apostle's amanuensis at Ephesus ; and Gallio figures here creditably as an exemplar of that Roman justice which frequently befriended Paul in the course of his stormy career. It taught his persecutors a lesson, and his ministry at Corinth was thenceforth unmolested.

THE RETURN JOURNEY

xviii. 18-22

18 *And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila ; having shorn his head in Cenchrea : for he had a vow.*

19 *And he came to Ephesus, and left them there : but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.*

20 *When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not ;*

21 *But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem : but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.*

22 *And when he had landed at Cæsarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.*

IT was probably in the month of August, soon after Gallio's accession to office, that Paul was arraigned before him ; and thereafter he continued his ministry at Corinth "yet a good while," literally "many days" (cf. ix. 23, where see exposition), no less than six months, since it was toward the close of February when he took his departure. His destination was Syrian Antioch, and his purpose was to make for the port of Seleucia ; but it was overruled by an untoward happening at Cenchreæ (not Cenchrea), the eastern seaport of Corinth. What this was St. Luke sufficiently indicates when he tells that the Apostle "sheared his head in Cenchreæ : for he had a vow." It was the fashion in those days for a devout Jew, when stricken with sickness or otherwise afflicted, not merely to pray for relief but to assume the Nazirite vow (cf. Num. vi), pledging himself to abstain for a season from wine and strong drink and let no razor come upon his head. Should it please God to grant his

petition, then he acquitted himself of his vow by a thankoffering in the Temple ; and the priest sheared his head and consumed the hair on the altar. In later days it sufficed for a Jew dwelling abroad that he should shear his head ere setting forth for the Holy City, if only he conveyed the shorn hair thither to be consumed on the altar. Evidently the Apostle sickened at Cenchreæ ere his embarkation, probably of his old malady (cf. exposition of ver. 1) ; and here it may be recalled how four years later in his Epistle to the Romans (xvi. 1, 2) he makes grateful mention of Phœbe, " a servant " or rather " a deaconess of the Church at Cenchreæ " who had been " a succourer " of many and of himself also. The Greek word for " succourer " denoted specifically a succourer of the sick ; and since caring for the sick was a deaconess's chief office, it is a reasonable inference that Phœbe befriended him in his present need and nursed him through his sickness, hearing from his lips the tidings of salvation.

The month of March would be well advanced ere he was able to set sail ; and he did not go alone. Aquila and Priscilla accompanied him ; and it is noteworthy that here as ever afterwards save once (1 Cor. xvi. 19) her name comes first (cf. xviii. 26 ; Rom. xvi. 3 ; 2 Tim. iv. 19), forasmuch apparently as she, by reason of her greater gifts, ranked higher in the Church's esteem. Their destination was Ephesus ; and evidently their reason for quitting Corinth and settling there was that Paul purposed making Ephesus the chief scene of his next mission and they desired to prepare for his coming and aid him when he came. It appears that Timothy also accompanied him, since, though unmentioned here, he was with him during his next mission (cf. xix. 22) ; but since neither is Silas mentioned here and it is probably he that by and by figures, under his full name of Silvanus, as Peter's amanuensis (cf. 1 Pet. v. 12), it would seem that he had parted company with Paul at Corinth.

From Cenchreæ they sailed across the Ægean to Ephesus. This was probably the ship's destination, and the interval between her arrival and the sailing of the ship which carried him forward on his voyage, afforded the Apostle an opportunity of visiting the synagogue and introducing his message. It was well received, insomuch that his hearers wished him to protract his

stay. This was impossible, since he must hasten to Jerusalem for the discharge of his vow and, as he explained in a sentence which, though lacking in the chief manuscripts, may well be authentic, he would fain be there at the approaching feast: meaning, since the Passover, falling that year (53 A.D.) on March 22, was just past, the Feast of Pentecost in the second week of May. He promised, however, that he would return to them, "God willing." It is always expedient in laying plans thus to leave room for God's hidden purposes; and on the Apostle's lips "God willing" was no pious commonplace. He had in remembrance how already his design of "preaching the Word in Asia" had been frustrated (cf. xvi. 6, where see exposition), and his recent sickness admonished him how easily a like experience might befall.

PAUL'S THIRD MISSION (xviii. 23-xxi. 14)

VISITATION OF SOUTHERN GALATIA

xviii. 23

23 *And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.*

A BRIEF but pregnant narrative. It is nothing surprising that St. Luke tells nothing of the Apostle's visit to Jerusalem save that after landing at the port of Cæsarea he "went up" thither and "saluted the Church." For his business there was merely to discharge his vow and share *en passant* in the solemnities of the Feast of Pentecost; and he was in haste to "go down to Antioch" and report his doings during those three eventful years to the Church which had commissioned him. But wherefore is his sojourn there unchronicled? The reason is that it was brief and troubled. So St. Luke hints when he says that he "spent" or, as the original rather signifies, "put in some time there." Nor is the explanation of his disquietude lacking. Distressful tidings reached him at Antioch. Since he was apparently all alone when he landed at Cæsarea and travelled up to Jerusalem, it would seem that Timothy had left him at Ephesus, probably journeying thence by the Trade Route to visit his home at Lystra. And now he rejoins his master, bringing an ill report of the Galatian churches.

What was the trouble? The Apostle had reasonably supposed that the decision of the Council at Jerusalem early in the year 50 (cf. xv. 1-35) had finally determined the vexing question of the relation of Gentile believers to the ceremonial Law, and he had gone on his second mission with a quiet heart. But now it emerges that while he was employed in Macedonia and

Achaia, the implacable Judaists had been busy among his Galatian converts, impugning his apostolic authority and unsettling their faith. He had thought to enjoy a season of needful repose and refreshing fellowship at Antioch, but this he must forgo and betake himself to Galatia in order to undo the mischief. It was impossible for him to set out on the instant, and he hastily penned a message of remonstrance and appeal—his Epistle to the Galatians—and despatched it forthwith that it might arrest the trouble and herald his speedy arrival. As soon as he might, probably in the month of July, he set forth on a third mission and, travelling overland through Syria-Cilicia, “made a missionary progress through the Phrygo-Galatic District” (cf. xvi. 6, where see exposition), visiting in succession the churches at Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch.

EPHESUS (xviii. 24—xix)

I. THREE MONTHS' JEWISH MINISTRY

xviii. 24—xix. 8

24 *And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.*

25 *This man was instructed in the way of the Lord ; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.*

26 *And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue : whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*

27 *And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him : who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace :*

28 *For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus *was Christ.*

1 *And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus : and finding certain disciples,*

2 *He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed ? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.*

3 *And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized ? And they said, Unto John's baptism.*

4 *Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.*

5 *When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

*Or, is the Christ.

6 *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them ; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*

7 *And all the men were about twelve.*

8 *And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.*

IT was about the beginning of August when the Apostle began at Derbe the revisitation of his Galatian churches, and it took him some two months to accomplish it. He was then free to address himself to that once frustrated (cf. xvi. 6) but resolutely cherished (cf. xviii. 21) enterprise—the evangelisation of the great Province of Asia. His goal was Ephesus, its famed capital, where he achieved a ministry of far-reaching consequence ; and it marks St. Luke's sense of its importance that he now dwells upon its inception, showing how the ground was prepared against the Apostle's advent.

Some five months ago he had left Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus, and they had been well employed during the interval. They had encountered in the synagogue a remarkable stranger—a Jew named Apollos hailing from the brilliant city of Alexandria, which was then the world's chief seat of learning and held much intellectual commerce with the scarce less brilliant city of Ephesus, “ the Light of Asia ” as she was styled. He was, as the phrase of the original signifies, not merely “ an eloquent ” but “ a learned man ” ; and his mind, open to the impulses of a restless age, had been especially touched by the movement which John the Baptist had inaugurated. The work of that last and greatest of the prophets of Israel had been a requickening of the ancient hope of the Messiah ; and, with a persuasiveness born of his own fervent conviction, his intimacy with the prophetic scriptures, and his moving eloquence, Apollos was reiterating the Baptist's call to repentance.

“ This man had ‘ The Way of the Lord ’ by heart.” Even as in early days Christian teachers were furnished with “ Testimonies ”—collections of Old Testament evidences for use in their reasoning with the Jews, so were the disciples of John ;

and "The Way of the Lord" (cf. Mt. iii. 3) was the felicitous title of such a manual, compiled perhaps by the great master himself. Apollos "had it by heart," and "he would speak and teach accurately the things concerning (not "the Lord" but) Jesus." He indeed knew nothing of Jesus, yet in unfolding the prophetic scriptures he was all unwittingly proclaiming Him of whom they testified. And here Priscilla and Aquila had their opportunity. They interviewed Apollos and told him of Jesus and His Death and Resurrection; and thenceforth his message was no longer that the Messiah was at hand but that He had come, and that "the Messiah was Jesus" (ver. 28; cf. xvii. 3, where see exposition).

It was an effective preparation for Paul's ministry at Ephesus, and it would have been well had Apollos remained there to co-operate with him; but unfortunately he was summoned thence. The story, as unfolded by Beza's Manuscript, is that some Corinthians visited Ephesus and, charmed with his eloquence, "besought him to cross over with them to their country." He went, and his preaching captivated Corinth; but it proved, through no fault of his, the occasion of an unhappy issue which sorely embarrassed the Apostle and grieved none more than Apollos himself (cf. 1 Cor. i. 12, iii. 3-9).

It was the beginning of October when the Apostle set out from Pisidian Antioch, the last station in his progress through southern Galatia, and proceeded to Ephesus. The straight way thither followed the Trade Route through the valley of the Lycus and the Mæander, but considering the risk he would run by venturing into that enervating region, deprived as he had been of a needful season of repose at Syrian Antioch, and the likelihood, moreover, of detention by lingering to preach in the lesser towns along the route, he diverged from the highway and hastened across the rugged and sparsely peopled uplands to the north. Thus achieving his end, he took up his abode with Aquila and Priscilla, as he himself shows when, writing by and by from Ephesus to the Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 19), he, according to several authorities, sends a greeting from "Aquila and Prisca, with whom I am lodging."

In the teeming population of a city like Ephesus, a

cosmopolitan city and by reason of its situation a meeting-place betwixt East and West, there were strange admixtures ; and the Apostle encountered there a singularly interesting and truly pathetic company of about a dozen. They were Jews, and they were elderly if not aged folk, since it appears that they had experienced the memorable revival at Bethabara beyond Jordan some twenty-seven years ago (cf. Mt. iii). They had been baptised by John with his baptism of repentance ; they had heard and believed his announcement of Jesus as the Messiah ; and they had been the Lord's disciples during the three years of His earthly ministry. To them as to all His disciples, even the Apostles, His crucifixion had seemed an irretrievable disaster, the death of their fond hopes ; and they had fled panic-stricken from the menace of the rulers and the scene of their discomfiture, nor had they ever in their distant exile heard of the glorious issue—His Resurrection, His Ascension, and the gift of His blessed Spirit. All these four and twenty years they had dwelt there, mourning their perished hopes, yet ever wistfully remembering the Master whom they had loved and whose disciples they still called themselves. No wonder their weary old hearts leaped up in glad surprise at the Apostle's tidings. Their Day of Pentecost, so long deferred, so unexpected, had come at last.

2. TWO YEARS' GENTILE MINISTRY

xix. 9-20

9 *But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.*

10 *And this continued by the space of two years ; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.*

11 *And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul :*

12 *So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.*

13 *Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.*

14 *And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.*

15 *And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know ; but who are ye ?*

16 *And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.*

17 *And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus ; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.*

18 *And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.*

19 *Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men : and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.*

20 *So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.*

IT is an evidence of the interest which the Apostle had awakened in the city that, when he was driven from the synagogue, he needed a meeting-place. His lodging in the house of Aquila and Priscilla might have sufficed for the little company that followed him thence, but it could not contain the ever-increasing numbers which thronged to hear his novel message ; and so he rented the lecture-hall of the rhetorician Tyrannus. There, according to Beza's Manuscript, he " reasoned daily from the fifth hour until the tenth," 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.—the only hours when the hall was available, since it was occupied by the rhetorician in the morning and again in the evening. Moreover, these were the resting-hours in the sultry East ; and only then was the Apostle at leisure for teaching, employed as he was daily at his craft of tentmaking (cf. xx. 34).

A full record of those two busy years would have been a long story ; and since the Apostle had already unfolded much in his correspondence with the Corinthian church, St. Luke is content with recounting several incidents illustrative of the conditions prevailing at Ephesus. The city, so wealthy, so excelling in art and literature, abounded in superstition. It was the home of magic and swarmed with charlatans. They wrought their trickeries by amulets, spells, and incantations, and these " Ephesian letters " were notorious. Here the Apostle found at once an opportunity and an embarrassment. The working of miracles in the name of Jesus was an apostolic office (cf. Mt. x. 1), and he performed it the more readily when he beheld the afflicted resorting to those rapacious impostors. See the result. They were " no ordinary miracles " that God wrought by his hands at Ephesus ; and their singularity lay in the means whereby they were procured. In the eyes of the common folk he was a magical personage, and fancying that there was healing efficacy not merely in the touch of his hand but in contact with his belongings, they would watch their chance as he plied his craft and, filching the napkin which had wiped the sweat from his brow or the apron which he had put off, would convey it to their sick. It was indeed gross superstition, yet expressing the need and faith of their dark souls, it won a gracious response (cf. exposition of v. 15 and Mk. v. 21-29). For it is blessedly true that it is the

heart that God regards ; and " a feeble groaning is in His ear a mighty cry."

Thus were the people's hearts opened to the Apostle's message, but far otherwise affected were the charlatans who traded on their credulity. It is remarkable how often these were Jews (cf. viii. 9-24, xiii. 6-12) ; and it chanced that an itinerant company of seven visited the city, and hearing him work his miracles " in the name of the Lord Jesus," they took it for a novel and efficacious spell and added it to their repertoire of incantations. The story of their discomfiture is thus elucidated in Beza's Manuscript : " Among whom also the sons," that is, " disciples " (cf. Mt. xii. 27), " of one Sceva, a priest, wished to do the same. They were accustomed to exorcise such persons, and they came in unto the demoniac (see exposition of Mt. viii. 28) and began to invoke the Name, saying, ' We charge thee by Jesus whom Paul preacheth to come forth.' " Strangers as they were to him, their intrusion irritated the lunatic. " Jesus I recognise," he cried, " and Paul I know ; but ye—who are ye ? " and leaped upon them in a wild frenzy.

The incident stirred the city. It was taken as a testimony to the Apostle and the Saviour whom he proclaimed ; and like the Florentines when, moved by Savonarola's appeals, they acclaimed Christ their King and made a Bonfire of Vanities in the Piazza della Signoria, so did the Ephesians with their books of magic. It was a costly sacrifice, estimated at 50,000 *drachmæ*, some £2,000. So dear did the magicians sell their incantations.

3. A RIOT IN THE CITY

xix. 21-41

21 *After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.*

22 *So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus ; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.*

23 *And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.*

24 *For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen ;*

25 *Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.*

26 *Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands :*

27 *So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought ; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.*

28 *And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*

29 *And the whole city was filled with confusion : and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.*

30 *And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.*

31 *And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.*

32 *Some therefore cried one thing, and some another : for the assembly was confused ; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.*

33 *And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.*

34 *But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*

35 *And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is *a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter ?*

36 *Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.*

37 *For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.*

38 *Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, †the law is open, and there are deputies : let them implead one another.*

39 *But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a ‡lawful assembly.*

40 *For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.*

41 *And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.*

THE Apostle's long sojourn at Ephesus was drawing to a close, and he was already laying his plans for the future. Observe his far-reaching programme. (1) On leaving Ephesus he would "make a missionary progress through Macedonia and Achaia." It is natural that he should have thought of Macedonia, since he had been driven thence some four years ago, leaving his work unfinished ; and now that peace was restored, he would desire to revisit his churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, and confirm them in the faith. Nor was it less

* Gr. the temple keeper.

† Or, the court days are kept.

‡ Or, ordinary.

needful that he should proceed to Achaia and visit his church at Corinth ; for trouble had been rife there of late—a bitter and many-sided controversy which, though St. Luke makes no express mention of it, had sorely vexed him during his sojourn at Ephesus and occasioned a protracted correspondence whereof his Epistles to the Corinthians are the abiding memorial. (2) After his visitation of Achaia he would conclude this his third mission, but he would not return immediately to Syrian Antioch. First he must go to Jerusalem on a beneficent errand—the delivery of the contributions which, in accordance with an old agreement (cf. Gal. ii. 10), he would levy of his Gentile converts for the relief of the impoverished Christians in the Holy City (cf. xxiv. 17 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4 ; 2 Cor. viii. 1-6, ix. 1-4 ; Rom. xv. 25, 26). And now he despatches Timothy and Erastus, one of his Ephesian converts in advance to organise the collection in Macedonia. (3) Already he was dreaming of a larger enterprise than any which he had yet undertaken—the evangelisation of Rome, the imperial capital, the mistress of the world (cf. xxiii. 11 ; Rom. xv. 22-29) ; and this he designed as the chief end of his next, his fourth, mission. His purpose was indeed achieved, but far otherwise than he had purposed ; for when he saw Rome four years later, he was “ a prisoner of Jesus Christ ”—an ambassador of the Gospel, but “ an ambassador in chains.”

The patron deity of Ephesus and indeed of the whole Province of Asia was the goddess Artemis (the Latin Diana) ; and her Temple was accounted of old the first of the Seven Wonders of the World. Its principal treasure was an uncouth image of the goddess, black with age, ill according with the magnificence of the shrine yet highly venerated forasmuch as it was fabled, like other sacred images of old, to have “ fallen from Heaven ” (cf. ver. 35). It was the visible token of her presence in the city ; and when at the frequent festivals in her honour it was borne in procession through the streets, it was greeted with the acclamation “ Great Artemis of the Ephesians ! ”

The Temple was the glory of Ephesus, and she proudly styled herself “ the Sacristan of Artemis,” engraving the device on her coins, whereof specimens still remain. And truly the

goddess deserved well of the citizens, since her cult brought them large enrichment. Especially at the sacred festivals the city was visited by worshippers from all Asia and indeed the whole Empire (ver. 27 ; cf. Lk. ii. 1, where see exposition). These naturally desired memorials to carry home ; and not the least thriving of the city's industries was the manufacture of models of the famous Temple in terra-cotta, marble, or silver. So largely had the Gospel prevailed throughout the Province that the trade was seriously impaired ; and again as at Philippi (cf. xvi. 16-24) the Apostle learned how perilous it is to interfere with worldly gain. Demetrius, a master silversmith, convened his craftsmen and represented to them the gravity of the situation, cunningly veiling his real concern under a show of solicitude for the honour of the Great Goddess. The double appeal roused his hearers. "They ran into the street," says Beza's Manuscript, "and fell a-shouting 'Great Artemis of the Ephesians!'" A crowd assembled at the familiar cry ; and, gathering that those alien propagandists had been detected in sacrilegious designs, they rushed after Demetrius and his craftsmen to the theatre, which served in a Greek city as a place of general concourse, dragging with them two of the Apostle's followers whom they encountered by the way. These were Gaius and Aristarchus, and our text defines them as "Macedonians" ; but several manuscripts read, perhaps rightly, "Gaius and Aristarchus, a Macedonian." Aristarchus was a Jewish convert belonging to Thessalonica in Macedonia (cf. xx. 4 ; Col. iv. 10, 11) ; while Gaius belonged to Derbe in southern Galatia (cf. xx. 4).

These two good men were indeed in a perilous plight. For an Oriental mob, fired with fanaticism, was a terror ; and horrible stories are told of tumultuary atrocities in the theatre of Ephesus. "Every multitude," says Democritus Junior, "is mad, *bellua multorum capitem*, precipitate and rash, without judgement, *stultum animal*, a roaring rout." And so the Apostle knew by recent experience ; for, writing to the Corinthians six months ago (1 Cor. xv. 32), he told how he had "fought with wild beasts at Ephesus." Yet on hearing of his friends' predicament he was for hastening to their aid—a

generous but reckless and worse than useless adventure, since his appearance in the theatre would have meant certain death for him, the prime offender, and they would have shared his fate. So his disciples restrained him, and their entreaties were reinforced by a message from "certain of the chief of Asia" or, as it is in the original, "the Asiarchs."

And who were they? The Asiarch was the president of a federation of the principal cities of the Province, charged with the superintendence of the public games and festivals and ranking next in dignity and authority to the imperial Proconsul. He held office for a term, and since, like the Jewish Chief Priest in later days (see exposition of Mt. xxi. 23), he retained his title after his demission, there were always several Asiarchs—the acting Asiarch and the Asiarchs *emeriti*. It is an evidence, by no means solitary, alike of the Apostle's inoffensiveness and the charm of his personality and of the spirit of justice which pervaded the imperial administration, that he had friends among the Asiarchs, though doubtless their intervention was prompted not alone by personal good-will but by solicitude for the preservation of order.

Meanwhile the theatre was in an uproar. Few had any idea what was afoot, save that some slight had been put upon their goddess; and suspicion naturally fell upon the Jews, always odious to their Gentile neighbours and contemptuous of idolatry. See what is written according to the true reading (ver. 33): "Some of the multitude instructed Alexander, the Jews putting him forward." It is an awkward sentence, but the meaning is plain. The Jews in the assemblage were grouped apart; and alarmed for their safety, they prompted one of their number and put him forward to protest their innocence. He "beckoned with his hand" (cf. xxi. 40), soliciting an audience; but when he was recognised as a Jew, the clamour was redoubled. The theatre was ringing with the cry "Great Artemis of the Ephesians!" when the Town Clerk, the custodian of the city's archives and her legal adviser, appeared on the scene. Evidently a popular personage, he good-humouredly rallied the noisy throng on the absurdity of their behaviour. There was no need for them to asseverate their devotion to the

Great Goddess. "Ephesians," said he, "why, who on earth is there that does not recognise it?" Then he deftly turned the blame on Demetrius and his gang. If they had any grievance against those two inoffensive men, they had a way of redress. Had they never heard of law-courts and proconsuls in their good city of Ephesus? And finally he reminded them of the risk they were running—their liability to be brought to account for disturbing the peace.

THE RETURN JOURNEY (xx-xxi. 14)

I. TROAS

XX. I-12

1 *And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.*

2 *And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,*

3 *And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.*

4 *And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea ; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus ; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus ; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.*

5 *These going before tarried for us at Troas.*

6 *And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days ; where we abode seven days.*

7 *And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow ; and continued his speech until midnight.*

8 *And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.*

9 *And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep : and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.*

10 *And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves ; for his life is in him.*

11 *When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.*

12 *And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.*

MUCH underlies these opening verses (1-3); and the Apostle's contemporary correspondence illumines the situation. There had arisen among his converts at Corinth an unhappy controversy which had engaged his anxious attention throughout his protracted ministry at Ephesus, and which was still in progress. Observe the course of events. It was in January, 56, that the riot in the theatre befell, and its quelling was not the end of the trouble. Demetrius and his accomplices persisted in their determination to drive him from the city, insomuch that his life was imperilled (cf. 2 Cor. i. 8-10). His lodging was assailed, and not he alone but his host and hostess, Aquila and Priscilla, narrowly escaped (cf. Rom. xvi. 3, 4). He took flight and travelled northward to Troas (cf. xvi. 8), where he stayed, awaiting tidings from Corinth and finding meanwhile a large opportunity for preaching and winning souls (cf. 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13); and it was early summer ere he crossed over to Macedonia and "made a missionary progress through those parts," visiting his churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea and "giving them much exhortation." Especially at Thessalonica he encountered opposition from his implacable Jewish adversaries (cf. 2 Cor. vii. 5); yet his ministry was successful, and in the midst of it he received welcome tidings that peace had been restored at Corinth (cf. 2 Cor. vii. 6, 7). It was at the beginning of December that, thus encouraged, he proceeded to Greece or, after the imperial nomenclature, the Province of Achaia (cf. xviii. 12, 27, xix. 21). His destination was Corinth, and it was there that he (not "abode" but) "put in (cf. xviii. 23) three months," passing the time quietly in gracious fellowship with his penitent converts. And it was during this refreshing season that he composed the greatest of his extant works—the Epistle to the Romans.

Early in March, 57, he bade farewell to Corinth and set forth

on his return journey. He did not go alone. Five of his comrades had shared his flight from Ephesus : Gaius of Derbe (cf. xix. 29) and his fellow Galatian Timothy, the Apostle's attendant ; Aristarchus of Thessalonica (cf. xix. 29) ; and two Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus who, since according to Beza's Manuscript they belonged to Ephesus, the capital of the Province (cf. xxi. 29 ; Eph. vi. 21 ; 2 Tim. iv. 12), were converts of his own during his ministry there. These had accompanied him in his progress through Macedonia, and there they had been joined by Sopater of Berea and Secundus of Thessalonica. All seven had been with him at Corinth, and now they set out with him to escort him thence on his homeward journey (cf. ver. 4, where omit "into Asia"). His intention was to embark at the port of Cenchreæ (cf. xviii. 18) and, voyaging thence, reach Jerusalem in time for the Feast of Passover, which fell that year in the second week of April ; but his purpose was overruled. Some Jews, pilgrims to the Feast, were making the passage by the same ship, and it came to his knowledge ere embarking that they had laid a plot to make away with him during the voyage. It was nothing uncommon of old, where passions of avarice or revenge were at work, for a traveller on a crowded vessel to be stabbed and cast overboard in the darkness ; and so doubtless those fanatics designed. Apprised of the conspiracy, the Apostle and his companions took counsel and "decided"—so the original signifies—that, lest the conspirators should forsake the ship and pursue after him, the seven should quietly embark as though he were among them, and that he should travel overland through Thessaly and Macedonia. The ship was bound for Troas, and there they would await his arrival and rejoin him.

Observe here an instructive variant. Where our text has "he decided to return through Macedonia," the Codex Bezae and the ancient Syriac Version have "the Spirit told him to return through Macedonia." And this is indeed the Scriptures' accustomed manner of telling a story such as this (cf. xvi. 6, where see exposition), ever recognising the finger of God in providential constraint and the voice of the Holy Spirit in the reasoning of His faithful servants. And the variant is an early comment of a devout editor who would bring out the gracious

truth that at that dark crisis when the Apostle's design was frustrated by the malice of his enemies, God was leading him by the right way and accomplishing His own better purpose.

And so the event proved. It was a long and weary journey overland ; and, hasten as he might, it took the Apostle a full month to accomplish the march of over three hundred miles to Philippi, since on his arrival there it was just Passover-time, when according to his original intention he should have been at Jerusalem. Remember how, fully six years ago when the Apostle proceeded thence to Thessalonica, Luke had remained at Philippi (see exposition of xvi. 40) and had ever since been ministering there ; and now, as his resumption at this point of the first personal narration (cf. ver. 6) indicates, he abandons his stated ministry and accompanies his beloved master, moved probably by the latter's foreboding of impending trouble (cf. xx. 22, 23, 37, 38). Indeed the Apostle had sore need of that gracious and wise comradeship which so comforted him thenceforth until his martyrdom ten and a half years later ; and surely God had this end in view when He overruled His servant's purpose at Cenchreæ and led him on his way by that long and weary circuit.

The Apostle rested at Philippi all the Holy Week, which began that year at sunset on 6th April. On the morning of the 15th they sailed from Neapolis, and it was not until the 19th, "five days after," that they reached Troas and joined their waiting company. Why should St. Luke thus note the length of the passage ? He remembered how in August of the year 50, sailing from Troas to Neapolis, they had "made a straight course to Samothrace" and done the voyage in two days, forasmuch as they were then helped against the current of the Hellespont by the Etesian Winds (see exposition of xvi. 11). But now when they had no aid from these autumnal breezes, the current swept them from their course, and it took them four full days to fetch their destination.

Since it was the Apostle's third visit to Troas, he had many converts there, and he stayed with them for a week. The last day of his sojourn, the 25th, was Sunday, "the First Day of the Week," and late on the eve of his departure when their day's

work was done, they assembled in their meeting-place—an “upper room,” the loft of a poor tenement (cf. i. 13, where see exposition). Observe how vividly the scene is depicted, as only an eye-witness could have depicted it : the crowded loft “where (not “they” but) we were assembled” ; the numerous lamps ; the stifling atmosphere ; the lad, a mere boy (in ver. 12 for “young man” read “boy”), seated precariously on the sill of the open window ; the obliviousness of preacher and audience alike of the passage of the hours on so moving an occasion—the last time, as he believed, they would ever see his face (cf. xx. 38) ; the sudden tragedy and the dismay of the company when, rushing down, they found the boy, on the certification of Luke the physician, not merely senseless but “dead.” Like the prodigal’s father (Lk. xv. 20) the Apostle “fell on him and embraced him,” bearing him the while on his heart before the unseen Mercy-seat. And his prayer was answered. The boy stirred in his arms.

Late as it was, their business was not yet done ; for they had assembled that evening “to break bread” (cf. ii. 42, 46). And so they returned to their poor loft to accomplish this the sacred end of their gathering together. It is written that Paul “brake the bread and” not “ate” but “tasted.” See what this means. It was the devout fashion of the primitive Christians to make every common meal sacramental by breaking the bread and blessing it after the Lord’s example in the Upper Room ; and so did that company at Troas. They had assembled at eventide ; and it was now the small hours of morning, and they had need of food. But Paul still had much to say, much counsel and cheer to give them ; and the time was short, since he must set sail with the morning breeze. And so, while the others ate, he merely snatched a morsel, and “talked” or rather “communed” with them (cf. Lk. xxiv. 15) “even till break of day.”

2. MILETUS

xx. 13-38

13 *And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul : for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.*

14 *And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.*

15 *And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios ; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium ; and the next day we came to Miletus.*

16 *For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia : for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.*

17 *And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.*

18 *And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,*

19 *Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews :*

20 *And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,*

21 *Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

22 *And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there :*

23 *Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions *abide me.*

* Or, wait for me.

24 *But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*

25 *And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.*

26 *Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.*

27 *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*

28 *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

29 *For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.*

30 *Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

31 *Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.*

32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

33 *I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.*

34 *Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.*

35 *I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

36 *And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.*

37 *And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,*

38 *Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.*

IT was early in the morning of Monday, April 26, when the Apostle and his company left Troas; and they had no time to lose, since he purposed being at Jerusalem by the Day of Pentecost, May 28. Here a difficulty emerged. A trading ship must put in at Ephesus, and the importunities of his friends there would inevitably have detained him in their midst. See what he did. His determination to "sail past Ephesus" proves that the direction of the course lay with him; whence it appears that he chartered a little vessel at Troas. He could easily afford it, since the Philippian, with characteristic generosity (cf. Phil. iv. 15, 16), would send him and Luke away amply provided.

The little craft durst not venture on the open sea but hugged the land, casting anchor at nightfall and setting sail with the morning breeze which on that coast blew southward, speeding her on her way. The first day's run was to Assos, only some twenty miles from Troas by land but almost forty by sea round the promontory of Lectum; and here he recognised an opportunity for a season of quiet reflection and communion with God. On leaving the upper room he let his company embark and, travelling alone across the promontory, he joined them at Assos. Next day they made Mitylene on the east side of the island of Lesbos—a straight run of over thirty miles. On Wednesday they were sped some fifty miles to an anchorage facing the island of Chios. On Thursday, crossing the Caystrian Gulf and rounding Samos, they anchored at Trogyllium—a run of no less than seventy miles. Thence on Friday to Miletus—a distance of only twenty miles which they would accomplish by noon; yet there they stayed, forasmuch as, unable to visit Ephesus, he would fain transmit to the church what he deemed his last counsels.

Miletus and Ephesus were thirty miles apart—ten by ferry across the Latmic Gulf and twenty more by land, and a swift courier would deliver his message that night. Setting out betimes next morning (Saturday, May 1) the Elders would reach Miletus the same evening; and it would be nighttime when, after needful rest, they had their interview with the Apostle. Is it not a playful allusion to the untimely hour when he recalls how

during his "three years'" sojourn among them (reckoning the two years and a quarter after the inclusive manner of the ancients) he had been wont to "admonish every one night and day with tears"? That was not the first occasion in their experience when night had been turned into day.

It would be a lengthy conference, since he had much to say and much to hear. They would be eager to learn how he had fared since his flight from Ephesus over a year ago; and he no less eager, in view of mischievous tendencies already apparent during his ministry among them, to learn how the situation had meanwhile developed. It was toward daybreak ere after telling his story and hearing theirs he addressed to them this his farewell, so moving, so tender, so noble.

1. Consider that admonition (ver. 28): "Take heed to yourselves and all the flock among which the Holy Spirit appointed you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God which He won with"—what? "His own blood" our Version has. Here were indeed a strong affirmation of our Lord's true deity; but the phrase "the blood of God," though frequent in later literature, is alien from the New Testament and is moreover, as St. Athanasius protested, contrary to the faith of the Incarnation. For the Christian confession is not simply that our Lord was God but that He was God made truly man, and it was as man that He shed His precious blood. Hence many authorities read here "the Church of the Lord." Our text, however, is more strongly attested; and the difficulty vanishes when the sentence is rightly construed: "Shepherd the Church of God which He won with the blood of His Own"—"His own Son" (cf. Rom. viii. 32).

2. It was a telling enforcement of the admonition when he reminded them of those words of the Lord Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Measure thy life by loss instead of gain;
Not by the wine drunk, but the wine poured forth;
For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice;
And whoso suffers most hath most to give.

The saying is found nowhere in our Gospels. For these record only a very few of our Lord's words and works, which, as St.

John testifies (Jo. xx. 30, 31, xxi. 25), had they all been chronicled, would have filled more books than the world could contain.

3. The Apostle's foreboding of the trouble awaiting him at Jerusalem (vers. 22-25) was indeed realised, yet the issue was other than he anticipated. Once more (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 5-7; 2 Cor. i. 15-20) he was to learn how difficult it is to read God's purposes; and the record of his vaticination that his friends would see his face no more is a dramatic suggestion of the actual event. They did see his face again. He was arrested at Jerusalem and lay a prisoner for two years at Cæsarea and for two years more at Rome; but on his own showing (cf. 1 Tim. i. 3, 4) he was then acquitted, and in the course of the five years which elapsed ere his martyrdom, he revisited Ephesus and stationed Timothy there.

3. TYRE : PTOLEMAIS : CÆSAREA

xxi. 1-14

1 *And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara :*

2 *And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.*

3 *Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre : for there the ship was to unlade her burden.*

4 *And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days : who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.*

5 *And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way ; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city : and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.*

6 *And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship ; and they returned home again.*

7 *And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.*

8 *And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea : and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven ; and abode with him.*

9 *And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.*

10 *And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judæa a certain prophet, named Agabus.*

11 *And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.*

12 *And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.*

13 *Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.*

14 *And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.*

SETTING sail on Sunday morning, they sped "with a straight course" (cf. xvi. 11) a distance of almost fifty miles to the harbour of Cos; and next day, on rounding the south-western promontory of Asia Minor and steering eastward, they found, with pleasing surprise, that the wind, drawing from the west along the southern coast, was still astern and carried them that day seventy miles to Rhodes and next day sixty miles farther to the Lycian seaport of Patara. There they dismissed their hired craft and took passage by a Phœnician ship, belonging to Ptolemais but bound for the adjacent port of Tyre whither her cargo was consigned. It was the fourth of May when they got to Patara, and since a week would suffice for the four hundred miles' run thence, they would make Tyre by the 12th. Had they been straitened for time, they would have disembarked there and proceeded by land to Jerusalem; but since Pentecost was still a full fortnight off and Paul would expose himself no longer than he must to the peril awaiting him there, they preferred remaining by the ship until she arrived at Ptolemais.

It took a week to discharge her cargo at Tyre, and they not merely "found" but "sought out (cf. Lk. ii. 16) the disciples"—a little company of obscure folk in a great heathen city. Learning whither the Apostle was going and aware of the state of feeling there, they "told him through the Spirit"—a truly prophetic warning—"not to set foot in Jerusalem." But he had considered the risk and resolved to face it, and what could they do but sorrowfully acquiesce? It proves how he had endeared himself during that week's sojourn among them that they all, the women and the very children, escorted him to the harbour and bade him an affectionate and prayerful farewell.

It was a short run of some five and twenty miles along the coast to Ptolemais, and arriving there on the 20th they greeted the local Christians and next day proceeded to Cæsarea, evidently by sea on a coasting vessel, since had they journeyed by land, they would have struck inland from Ptolemais. There was a considerable community of believers at Cæsarea, under the leadership of Philip the Evangelist (see exposition of viii. 5) who had settled there some four and twenty years ago and was aided in his ministry by his four daughters whose lips, like his own, had been touched with prophetic fire (see exposition of xi. 27). It would seem that they played a part in the ensuing scene. The travellers were entertained at Philip's house and stayed "several days"—not "many days," since it was now only a week till Pentecost. He and his daughters were cognisant of the situation at Jerusalem, and they would earnestly dissuade the Apostle from venturing thither. When he persisted, Philip acquiesced but the sisters would leave no stone unturned. Prophetesses themselves, they had access to the prophetic order in the sacred capital, and despatched a message thither; and in response thereto down came the old prophet Agabus (cf. xi. 28). He warned the Apostle after the picturesque Oriental manner (see exposition of Jo. ix. 6, 7); and so distressed were they on their dear master's behalf that Luke and his companions added their entreaties. But all in vain. Affected though he was by their loving solicitude, his resolution was unshaken.

A PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST

xxi. 15-xxviii

ARRIVAL AT JERUSALEM

xxi. 15-26

15 *And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.*

16 *There went with us also certain of the disciples of Cæsarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.*

17 *And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.*

18 *And the day following Paul went in with us unto James ; and all the elders were present.*

19 *And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.*

20 *And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe ; and they are all zealous of the law :*

21 *And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.*

22 *What is it therefore ? the multitude must needs come together : for they will hear that thou art come.*

23 *Do therefore this that we say to thee : We have four men which have a vow on them ;*

24 *Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads : and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing ; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.*

25 *As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.*

26 *Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.*

UNABLE to dissuade the Apostle from venturing to Jerusalem, his friends at Cæsarea took pains to ease his journey thither. They would not let him and his company travel afoot with their baggage ; for where our Version has "we took up our carriages," the original signifies "we laded our beasts." And they deputed some of their number to escort them to Jerusalem and see them lodged there. Nor would they suffer them to make the long journey of sixty miles in a single day but, as appears from the Codex Bezaë's elucidation of the text, arranged that, setting out on the morning of the 26th, they should halt by the way, perhaps at Lydda, where they would be entertained overnight by Mnason, "an early disciple," a native of Cyprus, though now resident in Judæa, and probably one of the converts whom Peter had won in the course of his mission in that district some five and twenty years ago (cf. ix. 32-35). "There went with us also certain of the disciples from Cæsarea ; and these brought us unto those with whom we were to lodge. And on arriving at a certain village, we were quartered with one Mnason, a Cyprian, an early disciple. And setting forth thence, we came to Jerusalem (on the evening of the 27th, the eve of the Day of Pentecost) ; and the brethren welcomed us gladly."

It is no wonder that the Apostle and his company were thus welcomed, since they came laden with the bounty which his Gentile converts had contributed for the relief of the impoverished Christians in the Holy City (cf. xxiv. 17). This he would present on the morrow along with his report of his mission at that assembly of the Elders of the Church under the presidency of James, the Lord's brother. It was the Day of Pentecost, and the assembly would hardly have convened amid its solemnities unless there had been urgent necessity, as indeed there was. Ever since the Council of Jerusalem early in the year 50 (cf. xv. 1-29) the Judaists, the narrower sort of Jewish

believers, had in defiance of its decision been prosecuting their mischievous propaganda. As the Apostle's letters reveal, they had dogged his steps through southern Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia, not only unsettling the minds of his Gentile converts but denouncing him to the Jews as a traitor to their ancestral faith. And their propaganda had been largely successful. That Jewish plot which he had circumvented at Cenchreæ (cf. xx. 3), betrayed their murderous purpose, and its frustration provoked them to achieve it. The word had gone round, and from all quarters the Judaists trooped up to Jerusalem, intent on his destruction.

It had surprised the leaders of the Church when they observed so large a concourse—"so many myriads among the Jews of them which had believed, and all zealous for the Law." But they had soon discovered what was afoot; and, apprehensive not alone for the Apostle's safety but for the Church's peace, they had hit upon a politic device. Remembering how on the occasion of his last appearance in Jerusalem four years ago he had the Nazirite vow upon him (cf. xviii. 18), they wished he were in like case now, since his public observance of that old Jewish rite would have demonstrated his reverence for the Law and silenced his traducers; and they bethought themselves of a way of serving the same end. It was a gracious custom in those days for a devout Jew to procure merit by associating himself with a needy votary and defraying his expenses; and it happened opportunely that there were four such votaries then in the city. The morrow was the last of their seven "days of separation," when they would present themselves in the Temple for the shaving of their heads; and the proposal was that the Apostle should accompany them thither and not only pay the priestly charges therefor but pledge himself to provide their offerings on the day following (cf. Num. vi. 9, 10). Thus he would publicly attest his loyalty to the Law; nor would he compromise the liberty accorded to the Gentile Christians by the Council's decree which, the Elders assured him, they maintained inviolate (on the authentic text of ver. 25 see exposition of xv. 20).

UPROAR IN THE TEMPLE

xxi. 27-39

27 *And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,*

28 *Crying out, Men of Israel, help : This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place : and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.*

29 *(For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)*

30 *And all the city was moved, and the people ran together : and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple : and forthwith the doors were shut.*

31 *And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.*

32 *Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them : and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.*

33 *Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains ; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.*

34 *And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude : and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.*

35 *And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.*

36 *For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.*

37 *And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee ? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek ?*

38 *Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers ?*

39 *But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city : and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.*

IT was an innocent stratagem ; but though he adopted it to pleasure his well-meaning friends, the Apostle would have little faith in its efficacy. He knew too well the men he had to do with to expect that their enmity would be thus easily placated. And so it proved. On the morrow, the last of their seven " days of separation," he accompanied the four votaries to the Temple and paid their charges. His enemies had their eyes on him, and in his very devotion they recognised an opportunity for compassing their end. They had observed him in the city in company with Trophimus, one of his Ephesian converts (cf. xx. 4), well known to his Jewish fellow-townsmen who had come up to the Feast ; and they busily commented on the scandal of a Jew thus keeping company with a Gentile (cf. x. 28) and, as they suggested, introducing him into the sacred precincts. Next day, " when the seven days were about to be consummated " by the presentation of the thank-offering, they espied him passing through the outer court of the Temple on his way to the altar in the inner court, and they raised a hue and cry. The rabble of the city streamed in, seized the Apostle, and dragged him out to the street, to the relief of the Temple-police who were powerless to enforce order and as soon as the court was cleared, shut the gates. He would have been done to death like Stephen (cf. vii. 57, 58) but for the timely intervention of Claudius Lysias (cf. xxiii. 26), the commander of the Roman garrison at the castle of Fort Antonia, who marched down and rescued him, taking him prisoner and handcuffing him for security to two soldiers. Even so it was with difficulty that he was conveyed to the castle, insomuch that on reaching the entrance they had to carry him up the steps.

Once on the landing he was clear of the rabble, and he found breath to ask Lysias if ere being imprisoned he might tell his

story. See what ensued. Lysias had reason for dealing sternly with the prisoner. Recently a crazy fanatic, an Egyptian Jew, had excited a wild insurrection. Professing himself a prophet, he had, by extravagant promises of national deliverance, rallied about him a multitude of the citizens, as many, according to Josephus, as thirty thousand, including four thousand of those Zealot (see exposition of Mt. x. 4) extremists, "the Murderers" or "Assassins," literally "Daggersmen," so denominated because, with daggers concealed beneath their cloaks, they would mingle with crowds, especially at festivals, and stealthily stab supporters of the Roman government. The insurrection was quelled with heavy slaughter by the troops of the Procurator Felix, and its instigator fled and disappeared, leaving his deluded followers to their fate. It was natural that now, when the tumult arose, Lysias should leap to the conclusion that the rabble had got hold of the impostor and were wreaking vengeance on him.

He was sure of it until Paul addressed him. And what was it that then showed him his mistake? Observe his astonished question. "Canst thou speak Greek?" our Version has it. But this would have been no marvel, since Greek was in those days the universal language, the *lingua franca* of the East (see exposition of ii. 6-8), and it was freely spoken in Egypt, as the Egyptian papyri prove. Quite literally the question is elliptical: "Dost thou know [how to speak] in Greek?"—a colloquial phrase, signifying not "Canst thou speak the Greek language?" but "Art thou versed in Greek?" And the point is that among the various races which still retained their own vernaculars, the Common Greek was a rude jargon; and what surprised Lysias was that the prisoner addressed him in literary Greek with the accent of an educated man. "Art thou versed in Greek? Thou art not then the Egyptian?" Hence the Apostle's answer: "I am a Jew, a Tarsian of Cilicia, a citizen of no undistinguished city." It was a just boast; for at that period Tarsus was recognised as the world's chief seat of learning, superior even to Alexandria and Athens. Born and bred at Tarsus, of course he was versed in Greek.

ADDRESS TO THE MOB

xxi. 40-xxii. 29

40 *And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,*

1 *Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.*

2 *(And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence : and he saith,)*

3 *I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous towards God, as ye all are this day.*

4 *And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.*

5 *As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders : from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.*

6 *And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.*

7 *And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?*

8 *And I answered, Who art thou, Lord ? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.*

9 *And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid ; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.*

10 *And I said, What shall I do, Lord ? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus ; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.*

11 *And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.*

12 *And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,*

13 *Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.*

14 *And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.*

15 *For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.*

16 *And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

17 *And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;*

18 *And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.*

19 *And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:*

20 *And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.*

21 *And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.*

22 *And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.*

23 *And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,*

24 *The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.*

25 *And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?*

26 *When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest : for this man is a Roman.*

27 *Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman ? He said, Yea.*

28 *And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.*

29 *Then straightway they departed from him which should have *examined him : and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.*

PAUL'S desire was his liberation, that he might pursue his ministry ; and how better could he achieve it than by pacifying the angry crowd and so convincing Lysias of his innocence ? Experience had made him " a master of assemblies," and he skilfully essayed the difficult task. With his characteristic gesture (cf. xiii. 16) he addressed them in their Hebrew vernacular ; not that they could not understand the Common Greek, but their native speech was kindly in their ears and won him their sympathy. And see how he styles them : " Sirs, brethren and fathers," not merely showing them courtesy but claiming kinship with them. And this claim he demonstrates by telling them his story. He was a Jew like themselves, and though born at Tarsus, he had been educated at Jerusalem in their own famous college under the celebrated Rabbi Gamaliel (cf. v. 34). He could well understand their attitude toward the cause which he was advocating ; for it had once been his own. Some of them could remember how four and twenty years ago he had been its persecutor.

Why then was he now its advocate ? Theological argumentation would have been lost upon them, a rude rabble as they were ; and he judiciously eschewed it and rather recounted to them the story of his conversion on the road to Damascus (see exposition of ix. 1-19). It was an appealing narrative ; and had it ended there, it might have conquered their animosity. But he went on to tell also how there in the Temple he had been

* Or, *tortured him*.

called to the work of evangelising the Gentiles (see exposition of xii. 25) ; and this fell on their ears like a spark on tinder. See how vividly the scene is portrayed : the throng of fanatics yelling and gesticulating in the open square before the castle, the "tossing (not "casting off") of their garments," their fluttering cloaks and turbans, till the air was thick with the dust they raised. They would have stormed the stairs and torn him thence had not Lysias conveyed him within doors.

Being a Roman, he was ignorant of Aramaic, else the Apostle's address would have enlightened him regarding the situation. The anger of the mob convinced him that the prisoner had committed some grave offence, and he determined to have the truth out of him. Then, as in the days of the rack, the thumbscrew, and the boot, it was the fashion even under Roman law to extort confession by torture ; and he ordered that the prisoner should be scourged (see exposition of Mt. xxvii. 27, 28). Excusable in a military officer faced with an embarrassing situation, it was nevertheless a flagrant illegality. Torture was the last resort in the case of a prisoner who was obdurate under examination, and Paul had never been brought to trial, and so far from concealing the truth he was desirous of stating it. Lysias should have known this, but he did not know that he was dealing with a Roman citizen (see exposition of xvi. 37) and that in inflicting upon him the ignominy of scourging he was perpetrating a grave outrage. No wonder he was dismayed by the timely information and could scarce believe it. The proud distinction, formerly the reward of high merit, in those venal days was commonly bought and sold ; and how could the prisoner, a forlorn Jew, have procured it ? "For a great sum I acquired this citizenship." "But I," was the proud retort, "am a citizen born."

ARRAIGNMENT BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

xxii. 30-xxiii. 11

30 *On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.*

1 *And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.*

2 *And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.*

3 *Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall : for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law ?*

4 *And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest ?*

5 *Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest : for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.*

6 *But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee : of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.*

7 *And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees : and the multitude was divided.*

8 *For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit : but the Pharisees confess both.*

9 *And there arose a great cry : and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man : but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.*

10 *And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.*

11 *And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul ; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.*

OBERVE how Lysias' attitude toward the Apostle changes. It is not merely that, apprised of the grave blunder which he had unwittingly committed, he was apprehensive of the consequences and would make amends by showing him courtesy. His brief converse with the prisoner had revealed to him what manner of man the latter was ; and, like every other Roman official who had to do with him at this stage of his career, he was impressed by his bearing and recognised the nobility of his character. He would gladly, like the Philippian magistrates (cf. xvi. 35-40), have forthwith discharged him ; but Jerusalem was not Philippi. He had to reckon with the Jewish authorities, and durst not set the case aside. See how he proceeded. Since it had emerged in the course of their brief colloquy that the charge was concerned with a question of the Jewish religion, belonging to the Sanhedrin's jurisdiction, he required that court to convene next morning and deal with it according to Jewish law. At the same time he would see to it that the prisoner had a fair trial. Since the castle adjoined the Temple-precincts and had direct communication with the Hall of Hewn Stone, the Sanhedrin's Council-chamber, there was no need that the prisoner should be escorted thither by a military guard to prevent either an attack or a rescue on the street ; and Lysias accompanied him in person and was present at the trial.

His precaution was soon justified. The judges were the prisoner's bitter enemies, and the bitterest of all was the President, Ananias the Chief Priest (47-59 A.D.), who bore an evil repute for venality and despotism. The Apostle began his defence with a significant sentence : " Brethren, in all good conscience I have exercised my citizenship unto God until this

day." It was a twofold plea. Had he said merely "my citizenship," it would have been a disclamation of seditious propaganda ; but when he added "unto God," he affirmed also his loyalty to the sacred Commonwealth of Israel. He meant to enlarge upon both, but he got no further. His claim angered Ananias ; and, forgetful at once of the honour of the court and of the character of his office, he ordered his attendants to smite the prisoner across the mouth.

No wonder Paul's indignation blazed up. "God shall smite thee," he cried, employing a caustic proverb (cf. Mt. xxiii. 27, where see exposition), "thou whited wall!"—a prediction which had its fulfilment nine years later when, at the beginning of the troubles which issued in the destruction of Jerusalem, the tyrant was miserably done to death by the populace. With affected horror the servile officers protested : "It is God's Chief Priest thou art reviling!" And what of the Apostle's reply? It was not, as it is commonly understood, an apology. Rather was it, as the early interpreters generally recognised, a biting sarcasm. It were indeed an impiety to revile the Chief Priest (cf. Ex. xxii. 28) ; but who would take this for a Chief Priest—this coarse bully? "It is not the cowl that makes the monk."

Since, alike as a Sadducee and by reason of his character, Ananias was odious to his Pharisaic colleagues, it would please them to see him thus handled ; and here the Apostle perceived a door of escape from a perilous situation. He appealed to the Pharisees for support as one of themselves and an advocate of the faith which they held and the Sadducees denied (see Mt. xxii. 23)—"hope for the dead and their resurrection." The ruse succeeded. Kindling to their inveterate feud, the Pharisees forgot their quarrel with the prisoner and lustily espoused his cause. "No evil find we in this man ; and what," they suggested, according to the authentic text, dealing their rivals a thrust, "if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel?" Their contention became a brawl, grave and reverend signiors though they were ; and between them the prisoner would have been "pulled in pieces" had not Lysias summoned his guard and had him conveyed to the castle.

It was a shameful scene ; and surely the Apostle would

regret the part he had played. "Where," asks St. Jerome, "is that patience of the Saviour (cf. Jo. xviii. 22, 23) who, 'brought as a lamb to the slaughter, opened not His mouth,' but meekly says to the striker: 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me?' We are not disparaging the Apostle but preaching the glory of the Lord who, when He suffered in the flesh, rose above the injury and frailty of the flesh." By and by he confessed his shame at stooping to the ignoble trick of playing upon the mutual animosity of his judges and setting them by the ears (cf. xxiv. 20, 21).

It was a Pyrrhic victory that he had won, exasperating his enemies and aggravating his peril. No wonder he passed a troubled night. But "the Lord stood by him" and cheered him with an argument of faith. Of late, as he carried the Gospel ever farther westward, his ambition had been to reach Rome and proclaim it there (cf. xix. 21)—the fitting consummation of his mission, as the Apostle of the Gentiles. Surely it was so ordained of God; and hence he reasoned that, since he was immortal till his work was done, he would in no wise perish at Jerusalem but live to testify at Rome.

A JEWISH PLOT

xxiii. 12-35

12 *And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves *under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.*

13 *And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.*

14 *And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.*

15 *Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.*

16 *And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.*

17 *Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.*

18 *So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.*

19 *Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me?*

20 *And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly.*

21 *But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for*

* Or, with an oath of execration.

him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him : and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

22 *So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.*

23 *And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night ;*

24 *And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.*

25 *And he wrote a letter after this manner :*

26 *Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting.*

27 *This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them : then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.*

28 *And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council :*

29 *Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.*

30 *And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.*

31 *Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.*

32 *On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle :*

33 *Who, when they came to Cæsarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.*

34 *And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia ;*

35 *I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.*

ASSASSINATION was frequent among the Jews in those days of political and religious turmoil (cf. xxi. 38, where see exposition); and these forty odd were no mere ruffians. They were fanatics who believed that in slaying the heretic they would be doing God service (cf. Jo. xvi. 2). Possibly they were the very men whose murderous design the Apostle had providentially detected on the eve of his setting sail from Cenchreæ (cf. xx. 3). Balked there and apprehensive of his escaping by the favour of the Roman commander, they now resume the baffled plot; and, like Julius Civilis, the Batavian, when he took an oath to leave his head and his beard unshorn till he had achieved his people's deliverance, they pledged themselves to fast until they had destroyed him. It proves them no vulgar desperadoes that they took the Chief Priests (omit "and Elders" in ver. 14) into their confidence and enlisted their approval and connivance.

Little is recorded of the Apostle's antecedents and relationships. On his own indirect testimony it appears that his father was a stern and rigid Pharisee (cf. xxvi. 5; Rom. xi. 1; Phil. iii. 5, 6), and that his mother was no less devout forasmuch as, like Hannah of old (cf. 1 Sam. i. 15), she had dedicated her son to the Lord ere his birth (cf. Gal. i. 15). This is all; and the reason of a reticence so disappointing is doubtless that he drew a veil over the unhappy memory of the bitterness wherewith his kinsfolk would assail what they deemed his apostasy. Here, however, the veil is drawn aside, and we discover that he was not an only child. He had at all events a sister, and though she did not share his faith, her heart had clung to the outcast. She was married; and if her home was at Tarsus, how came it that her son was now at Jerusalem? It may be that he too was a student at the Rabbinical College, sent thither by his pious kinsfolk to retrieve the disgrace of his uncle's apostasy. See how he discovered the conspirators' design. He "came upon them"—so should the original be construed (ver. 16)—"and heard of their lying in wait, and he entered into the castle and told Paul." He overheard them arranging the ambush and, kindly disposed for his mother's sake toward the heretic, he hastened to warn him.

Lysias took prompt and effective measures. Recognising that there was neither justice nor safety for the prisoner at Jerusalem, he resolved to refer the case to his superior, the Procurator Felix, who had his residence at Cæsarea, the Roman capital of the Province. Lest he should be waylaid, he despatched him secretly under cover of darkness with a strong escort of "soldiers" (omit "two hundred"), "even seventy horsemen and two hundred guardsmen," and for his ease and comfort "provided beasts," riding-asses for himself and his companions, at all events Luke who, as appears in the sequel, attended him at Cæsarea. A hasty night-march of thirty miles carried them across the Judæan frontier to Antipatris; and there, since they were now secure from molestation, the guardsmen left them and returned to Jerusalem, and the horsemen conducted them some thirty miles farther to Cæsarea and delivered the prisoner at "Herod's Prætorium"—the old palace of King Herod which now served as the Procurator's official residence.

BEFORE THE PROCURATOR FELIX

xxiv

1 *And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.*

2 *And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,*

3 *We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.*

4 *Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.*

5 *For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes :*

6 *Who also hath gone about to profane the temple : whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.*

7 *But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands,*

8 *Commanding his accusers to come unto thee : by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.*

9 *And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.*

10 *Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself :*

11 *Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.*

12 *And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city :*

13 *Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.*

14 *But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets :*

15 *And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.*

16 *And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*

17 *Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.*

18 *Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.*

19 *Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.*

20 *Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,*

21 *Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.*

22 *And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.*

23 *And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.*

24 *And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.*

25 *And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time ; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.*

26 *He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him : wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.*

27 *But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room : and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.*

ANTONIUS FELIX was a brother of that infamous favourite of the Emperor Claudius, the freedman Pallas, who in the year 52 had him appointed to the procuratorship of Judæa—a dignity never previously conferred on a freedman. Servitude is the worst of preparations for authority. Without innate nobility one who has suffered oppression is prone, when he finds opportunity, to play the oppressor ; and the freedman Felix, testifies the Latin historian, “ by every sort of savagery and lust exercised a king’s prerogative with a slave’s temper.”

It evinces the importance of the case in the Sanhedrin’s view that its deputies to the Procurator’s court—the Chief Priest and (not “ the ” but) “ certain Elders ”—were accompanied by a barrister Tertullus ; but, as it proved, they had done better without him, since he damaged their cause by two tactical blunders.

(1) The fulsomeness of his oration. Well aware how odious Felix was to his Jewish subjects, he nevertheless lauded him as their benefactor. It was indeed no adulation when he addressed him in official style as “ Thine Excellency Felix ” (see exposition of Lk. i. 3) ; but when, in face of the recent insurrection (xxi. 38) and many a like happening during the five sanguinary years of his administration, he spoke of the “ much peace ” which the nation had enjoyed under him and the “ reforms ” which his “ providence ” had wrought, so outrageous was the falsehood that it might, as the Greek proverb has it, have blistered his mouth. And certainly it damaged his case ; for with all his faults Felix had no lack of shrewdness, and he would listen with contempt.

(2) A still graver blunder was his attempt to prejudice the Procurator against his military officer by representing the latter’s suppression of the riot as a violent and lawless aggression—a significant touch which some manuscripts obliterate by thus abbreviating the passage (vers. 6–8) : “ whom we took, from whom thou wilt be able, by examining him thyself, to gain full

knowledge of all these things," so eliminating all reference to Lysias. The longer text, however, is strongly attested, and is doubtless an authentic emendation of a manifestly corrupt passage. The point is that the sycophantic rhetorician, after the manner of his sort, here lapses into gross impertinence, admonishing the Procurator that his own subordinate was at fault and should be called to account.

When the Apostle's turn came, he spoke with a quiet dignity which commended him to his judge. It was no flattering exordium but rather a sharp thrust at his accusers when he expressed his satisfaction that he was pleading before one who had been so long "a judge unto this nation," and could duly appraise their outrageous allegations. So far from being "a mover of sedition" during his short sojourn at Jerusalem he had gone thither on an errand of beneficence and had employed himself in offices of devotion. The merits of the case were abundantly evident, and so Felix recognised. In contempt of the prosecutors he cynically accepted their advocate's suggestion that Lysias should be called to account and to their chagrin made this a pretext for indefinitely deferring judgment and also for detaining the prisoner. His motive herein was twofold.

(1) He had a full share of the venality which generally disgraced the provincial administration, and he hoped to extort a bribe from the prisoner as the price of his acquittal—an idea which would occur to him on hearing of the subsidies which the Apostle had brought to Jerusalem (cf. ver. 17), and which would afterwards be confirmed by the ministration of "his acquaintance," the Christians of Cæsarea (cf. ver. 23).

(2) He was personally interested in the Apostle and the cause which he represented, "having a more accurate knowledge of the Way" (a primitive designation of Christianity; cf. ver. 14, ix. 2, xix. 9, 23, xxii. 4). What this means appears in the sequel. His wife Drusilla was a Jewess, a daughter of Herod Agrippa I (cf. xii. 1) and a sister of Herod Agrippa II (cf. xxv. 13); and he had been informed by her of the religious question so hotly debated among her people. Hence, being interested in the prisoner and knowing that she would be interested too, he detained him. Impressed like Lysias by his

bearing, he did not confine him in a cell but accorded him the privilege of "free custody" (*custodia libera*).

"Some days after," it is written according to the fuller and doubtless authentic text of the original, "Drusilla, the wife of Felix, being a Jewess, asked to see Paul and hear his word. Wishing therefore to content her, he sent for him and hearkened to him concerning the faith in Christ." It was courageous of the Apostle when, instead of truckling to those potentates who had his fate in their hands, he "reasoned of righteousness and self-control and the judgment to come"; for these were themes which they could ill brook. Drusilla had been the wife of Azizus, King of Emesa, and Felix, enamoured of her beauty, had seduced her to forsake him and, in breach of the Jewish law marry himself, an uncircumcised Gentile. Yet, though his liberty and his very life were at stake, Paul boldly reproved them in the spirit of the prophet Nathan when he charged King David with his iniquity, of St. Ambrose of Milan when he confronted the Emperor Theodosius on the threshold of the church and barred his entry until he humbled himself before God, of John Knox when, arraigned before Queen Mary and her lords, he stoutly defied them: "I am in the place where I am demanded of conscience to speak the truth; and therefore the truth I speak, impugn it whoso list." And, as it was written of old (1 Esdr. i. 35), the truth proved mighty and prevailed. The guilty Procurator's conscience took part against him. But alas! he stifled its importunity, deferring decision until he should "get an opportunity." Indeed he had got his opportunity; but he let it go, and it never returned.

In the year 59 he was recalled. The occasion of his disgrace was a brawl in the streets of Cæsarea between the Jews and the Syrians over a vexed question of civic privileges. The former had the better of it until Felix let his soldiers loose upon them and slaughtered many of them and pillaged their houses; and it was in the vain hope of assuaging the indignation of the Jewish rulers and softening their evidence before the Emperor's tribunal that he refrained from his purpose of acquitting the prisoner.

APPEAL TO CÆSAR

XXV. I—I2

1 Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Cæsarea to Jerusalem.

2 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,

3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.

4 But Festus answered that Paul should be kept at Cæsarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither.

5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

6 And when he had tarried among them *more than ten days, he went down unto Cæsarea ; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought.

7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended anything at all.

9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me ?

10 Then said Paul, I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged : to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die : but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar.

* Or, as some copies read, no more than eight or ten days.

12 *Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar ? unto Cæsar shalt thou go.*

ANXIOUS to conciliate his Jewish subjects, the new Procurator, Porcius Festus, as soon as he had "entered on his province" paid a visit to Jerusalem. He was met there by the rulers with a petition for an immediate settlement of the long-pending case. They gave him their version of its merits and begged him to expedite proceedings by fetching the prisoner to Jerusalem and arraigning him forthwith. It seemed an innocent request, but their secret intention was to resume the frustrated plot (cf. xxiii. 12-24) and have him waylaid and assassinated. Evidently Festus had his suspicions, and he found a reasonable pretext for refusing their petition. Paul (not "should be" but) "was kept," "was in ward" at Cæsarea, and Cæsarea was the proper *venue* of his trial ; and moreover he had an appointment there (cf. ver. 13), and if he were to keep it, he could not stay at Jerusalem till the prisoner was brought thither and duly tried. Thus far, however, he would meet their wishes : he would abridge his stay among them and, hastening back to Cæsarea, despatch the business ere the date of his ensuing engagement. And so he did. He left Jerusalem, according to the probably authentic reading, after a stay of "no more than ten days," and on the morrow cited the prisoner before his tribunal.

The prosecutors reiterated the original charges of heresy, sacrilege, and sedition (cf. xxiv. 5, 6), and on each Paul protested his innocence. It was plainly a religious quarrel ; and since the decision of such questions lay with the Jewish court of the Sanhedrin, the Procurator, with a courtesy which evinces how favourably he had been impressed by the prisoner's appearance, suggested that the case be referred thither on the understanding that he would himself be present to see justice done. It seemed to him the proper and equitable course ; but, remembering his former experience of the Sanhedrin, how despite the presence of Lysias he had well-nigh been torn in pieces and had afterwards narrowly escaped assassination, Paul would have

none of it and claimed his privilege as a Roman citizen (see exposition of xvi. 37) by appealing to the judgment of the Emperor. It was indeed a challenge of the Procurator's procedure but in no wise, as our Version implies, an imputation of unfair dealing. For see how the Apostle's protest rightly runs : " To the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also art better recognising." Already the facts were becoming apparent to Festus, and the Apostle would not, as the original signifies, " be delivered gratuitously " to his inveterate and unscrupulous enemies.

The Procurator was staggered. Not merely was it to him as to Lysias a surprise to learn that the prisoner was a Roman citizen, but the appeal, if it were valid, would seriously impair his own prestige. For what would be thought at the imperial court of a provincial governor whose first administrative act was thus challenged? He would fain have disallowed the appeal ; but a hurried conference with his council, the officials who served as his assessors, ascertained its validity. " Unto Cæsar thou hast appealed : unto Cæsar thou shalt go."

STATE VISIT OF KING AGRIPPA

xxv. 13-27

13 *And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cæsarea to salute Festus.*

14 *And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix :*

15 *About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.*

16 *To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.*

17 *Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth.*

18 *Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed :*

19 *But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.*

20 *And because *I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.*

21 *But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the †hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cæsar.*

22 *Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.*

* Or, I was doubtful how to enquire hereof.

† Or, judgment.

23 *And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.*

24 *And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer.*

25 *But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.*

26 *Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.*

27 *For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.*

MARCUS JULIUS AGRIPPA was the son of King Herod Agrippa I (cf. xii. 1, where see exposition). On the death of the latter in the year 44 his extensive dominions reverted to imperial administration; but in the year 52 his son was gifted by the Emperor Claudius with the territories of Ituræa, Trachonitis, and Abilene, the former tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias (cf. Lk. iii. 1), whereto Nero after his accession in 54 added eastern Galilee and Peræa. There he reigned as a vassal king under the title of Agrippa II. His capital was Cæsarea Philippi, where he resided in hollow pomp and not without scandal with his widowed sister Bernice.

It was fitting that on the accession of Festus they should pay him a state-visit to do homage to the representative of their imperial suzerain; and in view of the situation which had arisen, their coming was peculiarly opportune. For it was necessary that an appeal to the Emperor should be accompanied by an official statement of the case; and, unacquainted as he was with the questions involved, Festus "had no certain thing to write unto his lord." It was a happy solution of his

perplexity when his visitors arrived and he learned that they could afford him the counsel which he so urgently required. For not only were they Jews but despite their moral turpitude they were ardent devotees. So he took Agrippa into his confidence, and told him of the prisoner who had been left on his hands by his predecessor, and his difficulty in dealing with a case which had to do with questions of—not the Jewish “superstition” (ver. 19) but—the Jewish “religion” (cf. xvii. 22, where see exposition).

To his delight Agrippa eagerly responded. “I have been wishing,” said he, “myself also to hear the man.” It was not merely that the Apostle’s fame had reached his ears. Remember that Drusilla, the wife of the Procurator Felix (cf. xxiv. 24, where see exposition) was Agrippa’s sister, and she would tell him and Bernice of the dauntless prisoner who had reasoned with her and her husband of righteousness and self-control and the judgment to come. No wonder he had been wishing to hear the man. It was simple courtesy that Festus should grant his visitor the interview which he desired ; and it would, moreover, serve his own end by elucidating the situation and enabling him to write an intelligent report.

PAUL'S APOLOGIA PRO VITA SUA

xxvi

1 *Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself :*

2 *I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews :*

3 *Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews : wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.*

4 *My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews ;*

5 *Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.*

6 *And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers :*

7 *Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God *day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.*

8 *Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead ?*

9 *I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.*

10 *Which thing I also did in Jerusalem : and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests ; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.*

11 *And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme ; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.*

* Gr. *night and day.*

12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

25 *But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus ; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.*

26 *For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely : for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him ; for this thing was not done in a corner.*

27 *King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets ? I know that thou believest.*

28 *Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*

29 *And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.*

30 *And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them :*

31 *And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.*

32 *Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.*

IT was a brilliant assemblage that filled the judgment-hall of the Prætorium when the prisoner was introduced (cf. xxv. 23)—Agrippa and Bernice with their retinue, the Procurator with his military officers, the civic dignitaries, and besides, according to the ancient Syriac Version, “those who had come down from the Province” on the occasion of the royal visit. The spectacle stirred the Apostle’s soul ; and the speech which he delivered when Agrippa invited him to “speak for himself,” was more than a personal defence : it was a noble and moving plea for the Gospel. It was not a controversial argument : it was a personal testimony. He recounted his own amazing experience—how he had been cradled in Pharisaism, “the most straitest sect” of the Jewish religion, had played the persecutor, and had been stopped in the midst of his wild career by a vision of Jesus Risen and Glorified (cf. ix. 1-19 ; xxii. 3-16). From that hour, obedient to the heavenly vision, he had preached to Jews and Gentiles the Gospel of a crucified and risen Saviour ; and though he had been counted

a heretic and so arraigned, yet he was none. For his Gospel was nothing else than a fulfilment of the ancient promise. Observe what is written here according to the true rendering of the original (vers. 22, 23): "Having obtained the help that is of God until this day, I stand here testifying to small and great, speaking nothing outwith what both the Prophets and Moses said was to come to pass, if the Messiah must suffer, if He by rising again from the dead is to be the first to proclaim light both to the People and to the Gentiles." That was the Apostle's message; and if it was indeed so promised of old then it was no heresy but a fulfilment of Scripture.

It was all very strange to Festus, unfamiliar as he was with the faith of Israel and its ideals and hopes.

Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;

and it seemed to him the brilliant fantasy of a brain-sick enthusiast. "Paul," he cried, "thou art mad!" And then, apologising for the involuntary interruption, he playfully added: "Thy many writings (the word rendered so in Jo. v. 47 and "scriptures" in 2 Tim. iii. 15) are turning thee to madness." For two years Paul had been detained at Cæsarea, a prisoner on parole; and how had he employed himself all that weary time? He was debarred from preaching, but he would converse with the visitors who had free access to him; and though none of these have been preserved, he would write numerous letters of counsel and cheer to his churches. His main employment, however, would be the study of the Scriptures, even as it was Bunyan's in Bedford Gaol, where he had "so great an inlet into the Word of God." When Festus entered on his Province and interviewed the prisoner who had been left on his hands, he would find him immersed in his precious "books and parchments" (cf. 2 Tim. iv. 13): and what wonder that, as he now poured forth his impassioned discourse, it seemed to one "lacking the burden of lean and wasteful learning" that it had turned his brain?

"I am not mad, Festus, thine Excellency (cf. xxiii. 26, xxiv. 3; Lk. i. 3, where see exposition)," answered the Apostle.

"They are words of truth and sanity that I am uttering." Thus courteously yet impatiently he brushed the interruption aside. It was Agrippa that he was dealing with, and he would not be diverted from presenting to him the issue of his argument—an argument which, though unintelligible to the Roman Procurator, was clear and compelling to a Jew versed in the Scriptures and familiar with recent events. "Thou believest, King Agrippa, the Prophets?" said he. "I know that thou dost." Then he paused for an answer. The issue was inevitable. Since Agrippa believed the Scriptures, he must acknowledge their testimony that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead and recognise the Gospel as the fulfilment thereof (cf. vers. 22, 23).

It was a straight issue, and the King, resentful of being thus driven into a corner, stammered out a feeble protest. Here unfortunately, as in other deftly turned passages, the original text has suffered by the mishandling of dull copyists; and both our Versions miss the point of his retort. It is neither a half-hearted admission, as King James's translators make it: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," nor yet, as the Revisers make it, a sneer: "With but little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Christian." It is the embarrassed remonstrance of one writhing in the grip of inexorable logic: "With a short argument thou art persuading me to become a Christian." And see how the Apostle responds with that happy humour which never failed him, echoing the phrases of the embarrassed King and making effective play with them: "I would to God that, whether 'by a short argument' or by a long one, not only thou but all my hearers to-day 'became' such as I am, except," he adds, holding up his hand with a fetter dangling from the wrist, "these bonds."

"A soft answer turneth away wrath," and so gracious and genial a riposte pleased the assemblage and disarmed Agrippa's resentment. Though the Apostle failed in making him a convert, he established his own innocence; and the conference more than served the end which Festus had in view by not merely discovering to him the merits of the case but enabling him to recommend the prisoner to the imperial clemency.

VOYAGE TO ROME (xxvii-xxviii. 16)

I. A TEDIOUS COURSE

xxvii. 1-12

1 *And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.*

2 *And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia ; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.*

3 *And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.*

4 *And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.*

5 *And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia.*

6 *And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy ; and he put us therein.*

7 *And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under *Crete, over against Salmone ;*

8 *And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens ; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.*

9 *Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, †because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,*

10 *And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with ‡hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.*

* Or, *Candy*.

† The fast was on the tenth day of the seventh month, Lev. xxiii. 27, 29.

‡ Or, *injury*.

11 *Nevertheless, the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.*

12 *And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter ; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.*

SINCE it was on July 1, the beginning of the proconsular year, that Festus assumed office, it would, in view of all that happened during the interval, be toward the close of the month when Paul was examined by Agrippa ; and it would be well on in August ere he was embarked for Rome. He was delivered to a military guard under Julius, a centurion of the Augustan or Imperial Cohort, a detachment of the provincial garrison charged with the conveyance of despatches to the Emperor ; and he was embarked on a ship hailing from the Mysian port of Adramyttium, with several other prisoners, probably *bestiarii*—condemned criminals who, instead of being crucified, were sent to fight naked with wild beasts in the circus for the entertainment of an idle and brutalised populace.

It stood him in good stead that he had won the esteem of Festus. The Procurator would bespeak for him the kindly consideration of Julius ; and his commendation, reinforced by the personal regard which the Centurion soon came to feel for so remarkable a prisoner, procured him no small alleviation of his distressful plight. He was permitted the companionship of two devoted comrades. One was his Thessalonian convert Aristarchus, who had shared his trouble at Ephesus and had accompanied him to Jerusalem and stood by him during his two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea (cf. xix. 29, xx. 4) ; and the other, as his first personal narration reveals, was Luke. A retinue was denied a prisoner, unless he were a distinguished personage ; and it is probable that these two were permitted to accompany Paul that they might minister to him, Aristarchus as his servant and Luke as his physician. And it appears that he needed both. For it is written that when the ship touched at Sidon, he was allowed to disembark and during her stay there—not “ refresh himself ” but—“ be taken care of ” by his

friends, the Christians in the city. It is a medical phrase for the tendance of an invalid (cf. Lk. x. 34, 35); and it is no wonder that after the long ordeal which he had sustained the Apostle had need thereof.

It was an unlucky season for a westward voyage. For the Etesian Winds were blowing (see exposition of xvi. 11), and these the ship encountered when she put out from Sidon. A clumsy craft with a single mast amidships and one large square sail, she could not beat to windward; and she held northward with the wind a-beam till she reached the southern coast of Asia Minor, and then, aided by the land-breezes and the current which there sets westward, crept along by Cilicia and Pamphylia till she gained the Lycian port of Myra—a tedious progress occupying, according to several authorities (ver. 5), no less than fifteen days. Julius' intention had been to remain on the ship until she came abreast of the Province of Asia, and then either disembark with his company at Ephesus or some other of the Asian ports and board one of the numerous vessels trading thence to Italy, or else proceed with her to her destination at Adramyttium and thence march overland by the Egnatian Road. But happily, as it seemed, he found at Myra a large ship bound from Alexandria for Italy with a cargo of wheat (cf. ver. 38) from Egypt, that rich granary of the ancient world which furnished bread for the teeming populace of Rome. Employed in the imperial service, she was at the disposal of an imperial officer; and, glad of the opportunity of making an easy and expeditious voyage, he transferred his company to her, though she already had a large complement of passengers (cf. ver. 37).

Leaving Myra, she crept slowly along the coast till she came abreast of Cnidus at the south-western extremity of Asia Minor. There she lost the advantage of the land-breeze and the current, and encountered the full force of the Etesian Winds. These ceased in mid September, and since they were still blowing, it was now early in that month. It was impossible for the ship to bear up against them, and she held southward and, rounding Salmone, the eastern promontory of Crete, the modern Candia, crept along the southern coast of the island as far as

Fair Havens. Here she put in perforce, since the harbour was on the east side of the promontory of Lisses, and on rounding this she would have met the westerly breeze; and here she lay wind-bound "much time," no less than three weeks, since she was still fretting at her cable at the Fast, the Great Day of Atonement, which fell that year, 59 A.D., on October 5 (cf. Lev. xvi. 29, 30).

It was indeed a vexatious situation. Unless favourable weather should presently set in, there was now no possibility of prosecuting the voyage. Such was the terror of wind and wave ere science had mastered them that as late as the reign of King James III the Scots Parliament enacted "that there be na schip frauched out of the realm with any staple gudes, fra the feast of Simons day and Jude, unto the feast of the purification of our Lady called Candelmess"; and for the mariners of old navigation was perilous after the autumnal solstice, September 22, and on November 11 it ceased for the winter. So now Julius took counsel with the ship's officers; and it proves what esteem the Apostle had gained that he was admitted to their deliberations. Indeed his judgment was valuable; for he had large experience of voyaging in the eastern Mediterranean, and already, though of this as of much else in his adventurous career there is no express record, he had thrice suffered shipwreck (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 25).

It was agreed that there was now nothing for it but to winter in Crete until the resumption of navigation in February; but the roadstead of Fair Havens was somewhat exposed, and the sailing-master, supported by the owner of the ship who was naturally anxious for her safety, advised removing some fifty miles westward to Phoenix, the modern Lutro, where there was a land-locked harbour, "looking," as St. Luke explains in nautical phrase (cf. R.V. marg.), "down the south-west wind and down the north-west wind." See what this means. The bay, facing east, was closed by an island which served as a break-water; and it was entered by a channel at either extremity of the island. From the point of view of a ship at anchor within, one channel lay "down the south-west wind," that is, north-eastward, and the other "down the north-west

wind," that is, south-eastward. There was thus secure winter-harbourage at Phoenix, and removal thither seemed a prudent course ; yet Paul disapproved it, aware by experience of the treacherousness of the weather thereabout at that season, and urged that they should rather remain at Fair Havens and run the lesser risk of wintering there. "Sirs," said he, "I perceive that (not "this voyage" but as in the previous verse) our sailing is likely to be attended with much injury and damage not only of the cargo and the ship but also of our lives." The expert opinion of the sailing-master naturally commended itself to Julius, and it was approved by a majority.

2. TEMPEST-DRIVEN

xxvii. 13-26

13 *And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.*

14 *But not long after there *arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.*

15 *And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.*

16 *And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat :*

17 *Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship ; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.*

18 *And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship ;*

19 *And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.*

20 *And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.*

21 *But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.*

22 *And now I exhort you to be of good cheer : for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.*

23 *For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,*

24 *Saying, Fear not, Paul ; thou must be brought before Cæsar : and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.*

* Or, beat.

25 *Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer : for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.*

26 *Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.*

IT seemed a justification of the decision when a gentle southerly breeze arose, promising an easy passage to Phoenix. They blithely set sail, but at the very outset they narrowly escaped disaster. On leaving the harbour they had to bear up against the wind in order to weather the headland of Lisses—a difficult manœuvre for the clumsy craft. St. Luke depicts the situation in terse sailor-phrase: “they weighed anchor and shaved the coast of Crete rather close.” It was an anxious moment, insomuch that they lowered the pinnace (cf. ver. 16) in case they should go aground. They just scraped past; and then they bore away across the Gulf of Messara with the breeze on their port quarter.

Their jubilation was short-lived. They had travelled no great distance when the southerly breeze died away, and “there smote down from it,” that is, from Crete, “a hurricane called (not “Euroclydon” but) Euraquilo” or “the Nor’ Easter,” the terror of those waters, “the chief plague of shipmen,” says Pliny, “twisting and breaking not only the spars but the ships themselves.” It struck the ship a-beam; and see what then ensued. Had it been a moderate wind from the north-east, she might have held on her course to Phoenix; but the furious blast caught her under full spread of canvas and heeled her over. They must ease her, or she would be swamped. It would have been well could they have laid her head to wind and worked her up under the lee of the land and anchored there till the storm abated; but that was an impossible manœuvre for an ancient ship, and there was nothing for it but to let her pay off and run before the wind. And so it is written according to the authentic text (ver. 15): “Since she could not face the wind, we gave way and were driven.”

Still their plight was perilous. The pressure on the large sail was terrific. At any moment the mast might snap, and the hull was a-leak with the straining of the timbers; and all the while the pinnace was towing astern and threatening to smash

the poop. After running thus for some thirty miles they came abreast of the rocky islet of Clauda, and running under its lee they made the ship snug. First they got the pinnacle on board ; and then, lest she should go to pieces, they undergirded or, in seaman's phrase, "frapped" the ship, passing cables under her keel and straining them tight across the deck to hold her together. Thus they averted the immediate danger of foundering ; but a graver danger still remained, inasmuch as between three and four hundred miles to leeward lay the quicksands of Syrtis off the coast of Africa, and should she continue scudding before the tempest, she would soon be engulfed there. And so they "strake sail." The phrase of the original rather signifies "lowered the gear" ; and it denotes not merely that to relieve the strain on her timbers and stay her mad career they lowered the large sail with its heavy yard, but that they set a storm-sail in its stead in order that they might "heave her to." Picture the position. Since it was on the starboard side that the hurricane had caught her as she crossed the Gulf of Messara, it was on the starboard tack that she now lay "hove to" under the storm-sail. So placed she would drift astern and at the same time keep forging northward ; and thus doubly impelled she would be carried west-north-westward in the direction of the island of Melita some 550 miles distant from Clauda.

Thus the hapless vessel drove on ; and next day, as she still laboured heavily, they jettisoned the loose lumber, especially the passengers' baggage and merchandise, "scattering all their spices on the stream, enrobing the roaring waters with their silks" ; and the day following, when the sea was lashed to yet wilder fury, "we," says St. Luke, "cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship"—the long yard, almost as long as the ship, with its enormous sail and heavy gear. Here (ver. 19) observe a graphic touch which some manuscripts, followed by the Revisers, unhappily obliterate. It was "they," the crew, that lightened the ship in the first instance ; but now the whole company lend a hand in lifting the huge yard with its cumber and launching it overboard.

The Euraquilo was, as the original has it (ver. 15), "a typhonic wind," laden with dense mist like whirling smoke and

black clouds which blotted out the sun and the stars ; and with no compass to point their course they were driven blindly. And their distress was aggravated by "long abstinence." The word of the original is one of St. Luke's medical terms, denoting properly a sick man's loss of appetite ; and here it aptly expresses the plight of the tempest-tossed voyagers. For days no meals had been served ; for the ship was a-wash, and the galley-fire would be extinguished ; and not only were they busy continually working the pumps and clearing the decks but with death staring them in the face they forgot their need and were content to snatch now and then a sodden scrap.

It is no marvel that they lost hope, and would have relinquished the struggle and resigned themselves to their fate. But here the Apostle intervened and rallied their courage with a strong assurance. It was morning, and he tells how during the bygone night, as he surveyed the situation, he had been divinely cheered. "There stood by me," said he, addressing a heathen company, "an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve." Remember the common significance of such language on Jewish lips (see exposition of xii. 7). It was no supernatural apparition. As on that other night over two years ago, when he was lying a prisoner in the Castle at Jerusalem (cf. xxiii. 11, where see exposition), he was visited by the thought of God's providential purpose and persuaded that he would live to witness for Him at Rome, even so was his despondency now dispelled. It was a reinforcement of the argument that he was actually on his way to Rome. Assuredly he would not perish. No doubt the ship, so battered and broken, was doomed, but she would not founder in the deep. She would be cast on some island, and he would get safe ashore and his comrades with him.

It is told of Julius Cæsar that one night, disguised as a servant, he was stealing across the Adriatic from Apollonia to Brundisium, and hardly had the vessel set sail when she was overtaken by a storm. The pilot was for putting back, but Cæsar discovered himself and, grasping the hand of the astonished mariner, "On, good fellow !" he cried. "Dare it, and fear nothing. Thou hast Cæsar on board and Cæsar's fortune

sailing with thee." It was impossible that the Man of Destiny should perish, and his presence was a pledge of the safety of ship and crew. Likewise reasoned the Apostle.

Now am I like the proud insulting ship
Which Cæsar and his fortune bore at once.

Yet how different was his confidence ! It was not in his fortune that he trusted but in God's sovereign purpose. God had work for him to do, and he was immortal till his work was done.

3. SHIPWRECK

xxvii. 27-44

27 *But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country ;*

28 *And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms : and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.*

29 *Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.*

30 *And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,*

31 *Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.*

32 *Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.*

33 *And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.*

34 *Wherefore I pray you to take some meat : for this is for your health : for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.*

35 *And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all : and when he had broken it, he began to eat.*

36 *Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.*

37 *And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.*

38 *And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.*

39 *And when it was day, they knew not the land : but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.*

40 *And when they had *taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.*

41 *And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground ; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.*

42 *And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.*

43 *But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose ; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land :*

44 *And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.*

FOR a fortnight they had been “adrift in the Adrias”—which, as defined by the ancient geographers, comprehended not merely the Adriatic Gulf but the Adriatic Sea, the middle basin of the Mediterranean betwixt Crete and Melita—when “about midnight the sailors suspected that they were drawing near to some land” or rather, as the original has it, “some land was drawing near to them.” So it seems to the voyager : the land heaves in sight as he approaches it and vanishes as he sails away. On the southern side of the entrance to St. Paul’s Bay on the island of Malta, the ancient Melita, juts out the promontory of Koura, and the practised mariners would catch the boom of the breakers and the white glimmer of the boiling surf. So they “suspected that some land was drawing near to them” ; and they ascertained it by sounding. At the first cast of the lead they found twenty fathoms and at the next only fifteen, an evidence that the water was fast shoaling. It would have been a happy discovery by daytime, since their only

* Or. *cut the anchors, they left them in the sea, &c.*

hope lay, as the Apostle had told them, in being cast on some island ere the ship foundered. But what if in the blind darkness she should strike a rock-bound coast where there was no landing? In the daytime they could see what lay ahead and might steer her on a smooth beach. And so, to stay her progress, they cast four anchors from the stern, thus letting her swing round head to land in readiness for running ashore when day broke. High-pooped though she was after the fashion of an ancient vessel, she was in parlous plight, since, fast moored, she no longer yielded to the onset of wind and wave, and at any moment a towering billow might break over her and engulf her; and it is no wonder that they "were praying for day to break."

Here was enacted a shameful scene in no wise unusual in like circumstances, as other ancient records testify, especially Achilles Tatius' narrative of a storm and shipwreck on the coast of Eubœa. The ship was in imminent danger of foundering; and the crew, headed by the owner and the sailing-master, launched the pinnace with the intention of rowing ashore and abandoning the passengers to their fate. Their pretext was that they would put out anchors from the ship's prow—a useless and impossible manœuvre, as Paul's experience told him. He appealed to Julius and his soldiers, and warned them that unless the sailors stood by the ship, they would all perish, since expert skill would be required for beaching her when the day broke. Mindful how his previous warning had come true (cf. vers. 10, 11, 21), Julius took his word for it now; and ere the dastards could tumble into her, the soldiers cut the pinnace adrift.

Nor was this the Apostle's only service in that dire extremity. Recrimination would have aggravated the situation, and he opportunely soothed the indignation which the crew's behaviour had excited. Indeed their demoralisation was not without excuse; for their nerves had been frayed by the long strain, and the whole ship's company were in like case. For a fortnight they had "continued fasting" (the same phrase as in ver. 21), and their abstinence had told upon them; and how better could they employ themselves—not "while the day was coming on" (ver. 33) but—"until day should break" than in making the best meal they might and so strengthening themselves for the

final ordeal? He set the example by "taking bread and giving thanks to God before them all" and then "breaking it and beginning to eat" (cf. 1 Cor. xi. 24); thus, though none would understand save his two fellow Christians, Luke and Aristarchus, making the sorry breakfast on the storm-swept ship, like that other in the prison-house at Philippi (cf. xvi. 34), a sacramental feast.

Invigorated by the food and still more by the Apostle's cheer, they all plucked up heart and set to work with a will, hoisting the sacks of wheat from the hold and flinging them overboard to lighten the ship, not merely that she might labour less but that she might run high and dry when they beached her at break of day. Then the darkness lifted and, to their joy, right to leeward on an unknown shore they descried a bay with a smooth beach. All was in train for the last adventure, and see how they proceeded. They did not stay to heave up the anchors, nor indeed would it have been safe in the teeth of wind and wave. "They slipped them and left them in the sea" (so read in ver. 40). Therewith they "loosed the rudder bands" or rather "the lashings of the rudders," two large paddles which projected from either quarter and which, when the ship was moored, were brailed up clear of the wash of the sea. And then, to give her way that she might run high on the beach, they hoisted (not "the mainsail" but) "the foresail"—a little sail which was set on a pole at the prow of an ancient ship, serving in its normal use to "bring her round" on a new tack. Thus they "held down for the beach."

Here an unforeseen mischance befell. The ship struck "a place where two seas met," literally "a place dividing the sea," meaning a sunken sand-reef. There the bow was embedded, but the stern was smashed by the onset of the giant billows. Still the plight of the castaways was in no wise desperate. For the reef broke the rush of the sea, and the water betwixt it and the shore was comparatively quiet and might easily be crossed by swimming or with the aid of floating wreckage. Had the ship run on the beach as they had anticipated, they would have made an orderly landing; and the soldiers were jealously guarding the prisoners, since they were answerable for their safe-keeping

(cf. xvi. 27). Now, however, it was a scramble for life: *sauve qui peut*; and lest the wretches should struggle ashore and make off, their guards were for killing them. But their officer restrained them. Paul was one of the prisoners and would have shared the common doom, and for his sake Julius spared them all.

4. WINTERING ON MELITA

xxviii. I-10

1 *And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.*

2 *And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness : for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.*

3 *And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.*

4 *And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.*

5 *And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.*

6 *Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly : but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.*

7 *In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius ; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.*

8 *And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux : to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.*

9 *So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed :*

10 *Who also honoured us with many honours ; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.*

OBSERVE the course of events. The Fast (Oct. 5) was already past when the officers of the wind-bound ship held their council and determined to make for Phœnix so soon as a favouring breeze arose. Thus it would be quite the middle of the month ere she set sail from Fair Havens ; and since she was tempest-driven for a fortnight, it would be early in November when she was wrecked on Melita.

It was a strange coast to them since they had lost their reckoning ; and when they saw the beach lined with spectators, they might well be apprehensive lest they had escaped the sea only to perish at the hands of

Savage men, who, more remorseless,
Prey on shipwreck'd wretches, and spoil and murder those
Whom fatal tempests and devouring waves,
In all their fury, spar'd.

Their fears were happily disappointed. " The barbarous people shewed us no little kindness." So our Version reads, but observe what St. Luke means by " barbarous people " or " barbarians." He is speaking as a Greek, and the Greeks in the pride of their culture termed all other races " barbarians." " Greeks and barbarians " (cf. Rom. i. 14) was their classification of mankind ; and here the designation is most properly rendered " the natives." They were neither savages nor uncivilised. Originally a Phœnician settlement, the island had passed successively under Greek and Roman rule, and was now included in the Province of Sicily. Naturally by reason of their isolation its inhabitants were somewhat primitive and not without superstition, yet they abounded in simple and old-world virtues, as St. Luke strikingly testifies. " The natives showed us," he says, " no little kindness " or, as it is in the original, " no ordinary philanthropy." And philanthropy signifies " love of man," the kindness born of a sense of human kinship, the " touch of nature " that " makes the whole world kin." It is instructive to observe how the word is employed in the New Testament. It occurs only thrice : once of the Roman Centurion's " courteous treatment " of his ailing prisoner (xxvii. 3) ; here of the humanity of those rude islanders to the shipwrecked voyagers ;

and again (Tit. iii. 4) of "the kindness of God our Saviour and His love toward man—His philanthropy." Where love is, there God is ; and since "in the darkest spot of earth some love is found," God, as the Apostle proclaimed (xvii. 27), is "not far off from every one of us." "As a sculptor," said Johannes Tauler of Strasburg in the fourteenth century, "exclaimed on seeing a rough block of marble 'What Godlike beauty thou hidest !' even so God looks upon man in whom God's image is hidden."

It was not long ere the Apostle found his way to the hearts of the islanders, and St. Luke relates the incident with manifest enjoyment of its humour. Since the town of Melita was situated on the other side of the island, there was no sufficient accommodation on the spot for the castaways, numbering as they did two hundred and seventy-six ; but the kindly folk did their utmost to shield them from the rain and cold. They sought a sheltered retreat and kindled a fire or rather a bonfire, the word used elsewhere (cf. 1 Macc. xii. 28) of a camp-fire. Here again Paul set a heartening example by gathering fuel ; and as he was piling on a faggot, a viper, benumbed with the cold, crept out of it and twined about his hand. The islanders knew him only as one of the prisoners, and concluded in their heathen fashion that he was a desperate criminal who, preserved from drowning, was thus overtaken by inexorable justice. But ere the creature could strike its fangs into his flesh, he shook it off into the fire and was none the worse. And thereupon, says St. Luke, "they flung round and said he was a god."

The incident was more than amusing, since it served a useful end by bringing Paul and his two companions into notice. It chanced that the camping-ground was on the estate of Publius, "the Chief" or "Primus" of the island—the official designation, as inscriptions still surviving prove, of its principal magistrate ; and when the story reached him in his adjacent mansion, he had them thither as his guests. Evidently he had a personal motive, inasmuch as his father was lying sick, and probably his hope was that one who was reported to have a charm against a viper's bite, might have the gift of healing. With professional precision St. Luke defines the malady as—not "a fever and a

bloody flux " but—"fevers and dysentery," meaning dysentery accompanied with intermittent fever. Here the Apostle had an opportunity of introducing the Gospel. He entered the sick-chamber, and first he prayed, confessing his own impotence and craving the Lord's promised grace ; and then, after the Lord's example (cf. Lk. iv. 40, xiii. 13), he put his hands on the sufferer and healed him in His name.

Why did he and his companions stay only three days in that hospitable house ? Assuredly it was not that their welcome ceased. Rather was it that when he found himself beset by appeals from other sick folk, he would betake himself to the town, where the need was greatest and he would be easy of access. And he no longer required charity. Whatever of gold and silver he and his friends may have carried with them when they set sail from Cæsarea they would leave behind them on the wreck ; else they would have fared like that passenger whom Ruskin tells of on a Californian ship, who belted his gold about him and was afterwards found with it at the bottom.

What skills it if a bag of stones or gold
About thy neck do drown thee ?

The Apostle was destitute when he struggled ashore ; but now he had no lack. The gratitude of his beneficiaries supplied his need, and would provide him with lodging and maintenance.

5. ARRIVAL AT ROME

xxviii. 11-16

11 *And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.*

12 *And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.*

13 *And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:*

14 *Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.*

15 *And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.*

16 *And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.*

IT was early in November, 59, that the ship was wrecked; and it was on February 8 that the winter's ban on navigation was lifted and the castaways might resume their voyage. It happened opportunely that they had no need to wait for shipping, since another belated grain-ship—named, after Castor and Pollux, the patron divinities of mariners of old, “The Dioscuri” (so it is in the original) or “Twin Brothers”—had safely wintered in the harbour of Melita, and was in haste to attain her destination at Puteoli, the Italian port where the Egyptian grain-ships discharged their cargoes for the imperial capital. Julius took passage by her for his men and his prisoners; and it was with mutual regret that the Apostle and his two companions parted from the grateful islanders, enriched with substantial tokens of their good-will.

The ship made an easy passage to Syracuse on the east of Sicily, a distance of a hundred miles, which at the ordinary rate

would occupy some twenty-four hours. There, doubtless through the failure of the wind, she was detained for three days ; and then she “ fetched a compass,” painfully beating up for two or three days against a baffling breeze to Rhegium at the southern extremity of Italy. There, unable to beat through the narrow Strait of Messina, she stayed one day, when the wind set in from the south and sped her briskly to Puteoli, a distance of two hundred miles, in something over twenty-four hours. The voyage thus occupied in all some nine days ; and since she left Melita on the 8th, it would be about February 18 when she arrived at Puteoli.

See what ensued. Though so briefly told, it is a momentous story ; and the situation is illumined by that cryptic intimation that when the Apostle was greeted on the way thither by Christians from the capital, “ he thanked God, and took courage.” It was with confident assurance of obtaining justice that he had six months ago appealed to the judgment of the Emperor. For Nero was then seated on the imperial throne, and as yet he had evinced nothing of the insane ferocity which made his subsequent reign the darkest page in the annals of imperial tyranny. At the age of seventeen he succeeded Claudius in October, 54 ; and for five years—thanks largely to the benignant influence of his tutor, the Stoic philosopher Seneca—he displayed a clemency which made those five years, commemorated as the *quinquennium Neronis*, seem like a revival of the Golden Age. The first evidence that the wild beast within him had broken loose and the reign of terror begun was his assassination of his wicked mother Agrippina in April, 59 ; and not until he landed in Italy did the Apostle hear of that atrocity and the rest that had ensued. The story would be told him in all its horror by the Christians of Puteoli during his week’s detention there while Julius was communicating with his superiors in the capital regarding the destination of the prisoners ; and it quenched the hope which he had hitherto cherished of a fair trial and prompt release to prosecute that ministry at Rome whereof he had so long been dreaming (cf. xix. 21, where see exposition).

It is no marvel that his heart sank within him. And see what it was that rallied his courage. It was about February 25 when

Julius gave the route for Rome. The distance thither from Puteoli was a hundred and thirty miles, and their march would be all the easier when at Sinuessa they struck the famed Appian Road. Tidings of his coming had preceded the Apostle, and first at Appii Forum ("The Market of Appius") and then at Tres Tabernæ ("Three Taverns") he encountered companies of the Christians of Rome who had come "to meet him," like the multitude which went forth to meet our Lord at Bethany and escort Him to Jerusalem (cf. Jo. xii. 13). It was, as the phrase signifies, not merely a welcome but an ovation, and it cheered his despondent heart. One welcome assurance it brought him—that, however he might still be regarded by the Synagogue in the capital, his great encyclical, "the Epistle to the Romans," which he had written from Corinth just three years ago (cf. xx. 3, where see exposition), had accomplished its mission and won him, in large measure, the Church's approval.

The long march from Puteoli would occupy quite a week; and so it was about March 4 in the year 60 when the Apostle at last reached Rome.

INTERVIEW WITH THE JEWISH LEADERS

xxviii. 17-31

17 *And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together : and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.*

18 *Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.*

19 *But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar ; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.*

20 *For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you : because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.*

21 *And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judæa concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.*

22 *But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest : for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.*

23 *And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging ; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.*

24 *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.*

25 *And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,*

26 *Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand ; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive :*

27 *For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed ; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

28 *Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.*

29 *And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.*

30 *And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,*

31 *Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.*

AS an appellant to the Emperor's tribunal Paul was committed on his arrival to the custody of the Prætorian Guard, that distinguished cohort which served as the Emperor's body-guard and executive. Fortunately for him its present commander was that honourable soldier Afranius Burrus, who had shared with Seneca the tutelage of the youthful Nero and, like Seneca, was soon to fall a victim to his graceless cruelty. He received from Julius the report of the Procurator Festus, and would learn also from the Centurion's lips how bravely and helpfully the prisoner had borne himself during the disastrous voyage ; and he accorded him the privilege of " free custody " (see exposition of xxiv. 23). The Apostle was not confined in a cell at the barracks on the Cælian Hill, but allowed to reside as a prisoner at large in a " lodging." The word may signify an inn, but most probably it rather signifies here, as in the only other instance where it occurs in the New Testament (Phm. 22), the abode of some Christian in the city who received him into his home and entertained him as an honoured guest. There he would enjoy the kindly tendance which he needed after the long ordeal of the voyage ; yet his liberty was severely limited inasmuch as, though his friends had unrestricted access to him, he was not suffered to stir abroad, and he was under the constant surveillance of a Prætorian guardsman.

Thus it was possible for him to make a beginning of the ministry which he hoped soon to prosecute in the city ; and, in pursuance of the principle which he had constantly observed hitherto in the course of his missions, he would appeal “ to the Jew first,” and since he might not visit the synagogue, he invited its rulers to wait upon him in his lodging. A deputation appeared, and with all courtesy he introduced himself to them by explaining how it came to pass that he was there a prisoner. Observe his deft conclusion. His visitors were Pharisees, not unbelieving Sadducees, and it was reasonable that he should expect their sympathy, faithful as they were to the Scriptures and to the hope which these proclaimed of the Coming Saviour. “ For,” said he, raising his hand and displaying the fetter which linked him to the sentry (cf. xxvi. 29), “ it is for the Hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.” They answered, after the manner of their order, coldly and haughtily and not without insolence, professing that they knew nothing of him, and had heard no ill of him either by a formal communication from the Jewish authorities or by the casual report of Jewish visitors to Rome—a damning pretence, since the Apostle was one “ whom not to know argued themselves unknown.” But, they allowed, the sect which he represented had an evil repute, and they would be pleased to hear what he had to say.

So “ they appointed him a day, and came unto him at his lodging in larger numbers.” He presented his Gospel, adducing the foreshadowings of the Messiah in the Law and the Prophets and showing how these had their fulfilment in Jesus ; and it evinces how keenly the question was debated, point by point, that the conference continued the livelong day. “ Some (not “ believed ” but as in ver. 23) were persuaded, while others disbelieved ” ; and it ended in a wrangle betwixt them. None were won for the Faith ; and, like the Master before him (cf. Mt. xiii. 14, 15 ; Mk. iv. 12 ; cf. Jo. xii. 39, 40, where see exposition), he reminded them of the doom which the prophet had pronounced upon their fathers’ obduracy (Is. vi. 9, 10). And then, after his wont (cf. xiii. 46, xviii. 6), he told them that, since they had rejected his message, he would thenceforth address it to the Gentiles.

Thus was the conference broken off. The ensuing verse (29) is lacking in the principal manuscripts; nevertheless it is strongly attested, and the narrative would be poorer without it. For it suggests that the Apostle's argument was not eventually unavailing. His hearers indeed departed, but they departed "with much questioning in themselves," and it may well be that some yielded to the Holy Spirit's persuasion.

Here St. Luke's narrative ends, cut short by his untimely death (see Introduction); and on the evidence of their phrasing the last two verses are from another hand. They were added to round off the broken narrative by the friend who published it after his decease. See what they tell. It was only his expectation of a speedy settlement of his case that reconciled the Apostle to acceptance of hospitality on his arrival at Rome. For it was never his manner to be "chargeable to any" (cf. 1 Th. ii. 9; 2 Th. iii. 8), and while asserting a preacher's title to maintenance according to the Lord's ordinance, he preferred, where he could, to earn his livelihood by practising his craft of tent-making (cf. xx. 33, 34; 1 Cor. ix. 11-15). So would he now have done at Rome had he, as he had anticipated, been immediately brought to trial and acquitted. But the days passed, and still he never received the expected citation to the Emperor's tribunal, so regardless was the tyrant of his proper offices of judgment and mercy. Like Dante, he realised "how bitter is another's bread and how steep another's stairs"; and he would not outstay his welcome. And he had no need. For he had left Melita laden with bounties (cf. xxviii. 10), and meanwhile at all events he could afford to "dwell in his own hired house."

EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL
TO THE ROMANS

INTRODUCTION

THIS, the greatest of St. Paul's epistles and the noblest theological treatise ever penned, was written at Corinth in the hospitable house of Gaius (xvi. 23 ; cf. 1 Cor. i. 14) during the three months (Dec., 56-Jan., 57) which he passed there in the course of his third mission (Ac. xx. 3) ere setting forth on his return journey, laden with the contributions of his Gentile converts in Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia for the impoverished Christians of Jerusalem (xv. 25 ; cf. Ac. xxiv. 17).

In the prosecution of his vocation as the Apostle of the Gentiles he had been vexed by the hostility of the Judaists who, despite the judgment of the Council of Jerusalem early in the year 50 (Ac. xv. 1-29, where see exposition), had tracked his steps, disturbing the minds of his converts by denying his apostolic authority and denouncing his Gospel of salvation by simple faith in Christ apart from the works of the Law (see exposition of Ac. xviii. 23). He had dealt with the question as occasion arose, especially in his hastily penned epistle to the Galatians ; but there still was urgent need for a larger treatise exhibiting the relation between the Law and the Gospel, defining his doctrine of Justification by Faith, and discussing the problems which it involves. And to this task he profitably devoted that season of repose at Corinth.

Regarding the destination of the epistle it may seem unnecessary to speak, since at the outset (i. 7, 15) he addresses " all that are in Rome " and wishes that, as he had preached the Gospel to others, he might preach it " to you that are in Rome also," and toward the close (xv. 22-29), intimates his intention of visiting them soon. But here a difficulty emerges, inasmuch as he proceeds (xvi. 3-16) to send greetings to a host of friends, mentioning them by name ; and while nothing is now known of the rest, it is certain that the first three, Prisca, Aquila, and Epænetus, resided not at Rome, but at Ephesus. Formerly indeed Prisca and Aquila had belonged to the imperial capital

(cf. Ac. xviii. 2), but almost four years ago they had settled at Ephesus and there they still remained (cf. Ac. xviii. 18, 19, 26 ; 2 Tim. iv. 19). And as for Epānetus, he was "the first fruits (not "of Achaia," as our text has it, but according to the best authorities) of Asia unto Christ"—the earliest trophy of the Apostle's Ephesian ministry.

The explanation is that the epistle was not destined to the church at Rome alone but to all the churches which had never enjoyed the Apostle's presence and instruction and were thus the more liable to be led astray by the Judaist propaganda. It was "an encyclical letter"; and in the original draft, as documentary evidence attests, where "in Rome" occurs in our text, there was left a blank space where the proper destination was entered in each of the copies delivered to the various recipients. Along with the encyclical a "covering letter" was sent to each church; and the fifteenth chapter is the covering letter to Rome, and the sixteenth (vers. 1-20) the covering letter to Ephesus accompanying the copy sent thither for distribution among the churches of the Province which the Apostle, forasmuch as his personal ministry in Asia was confined to the capital, had never visited (cf. Col. ii. 1).

SUMMARY

	PASSAGE	PAGE
PREFACE	i. 1-15	29I

I. DOCTRINAL

(i. 16-v)

THE THESIS	i. 16, 17	297
THE DEMONSTRATION (i. 18-iv) :		
1. FAILURE OF THE GENTILES TO ATTAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS	i. 18-32	299
2. FAILURE OF THE JEWS (ii-iii. 20) :		
(1) THE INDICTMENT	ii. 1-16	303
(2) THE PROOF	ii. 17-29	306
(3) JEWISH OBJECTIONS	iii. 1-20	309
3. GOD'S WAY OF JUSTIFICATION	iii. 21-31	313
4. SCRIPTURALNESS OF THE DOCTRINE	iv	317
A DEVOTIONAL INTERLUDE	v	321

II. APOLOGETIC

(vi-xi)

1. MORAL ISSUES	vi	331
2. THE POSITION OF THE LAW	vii. 1-25a	335
A DEVOTIONAL RETROSPECT (vii. 25b-viii) :		
(1) THE NEXUS OF SALVATION	vii. 25b-viii. 13	340
(2) A THREEFOLD INCENTIVE	viii. 14-27	344
(3) A SONG OF TRIUMPH	viii. 28-39	350
3. THE ELECTION OF ISRAEL (ix-xi) :		
(1) THE TRAGEDY OF HER REJECTION	ix	354
(2) HER INEXCUSABILITY	x	361
(3) ASSURANCE OF HER RESTORATION	xi	365

III. PRACTICAL

xii-xiv

	PASSAGE	PAGE
1. CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP	xii	375
2. CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP	xiii	381
3. CHRISTIAN CHARITY	xiv	385

PERSONAL MESSAGES

(xv, xvi)

COVERING LETTER TO ROME	xv	391
COVERING LETTER TO EPHESUS	xvi. I-20	396
GREETINGS AND DOXOLOGY	xvi. 21-27	399

PREFACE

i. I-15

1 *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,*

2 *(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)*

3 *Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh ;*

4 *And *declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead :*

5 *By whom we have received grace and apostleship, †for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name :*

6 *Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ :*

7 *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints : Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

8 *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.*

9 *For God is my witness, whom I serve ‡with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers ;*

10 *Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.*

11 *For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established ;*

12 *That is, that I may be comforted together §with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.*

13 *Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit ||among you also, even as among other Gentiles.*

* Gr. *determined.*

† Or, *to the obedience of faith.*

‡ Or, *in my spirit.*

§ Or, *in you.*

|| Or, *in you.*

14 *I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians ; both to the wise, and to the unwise.*

15 *So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.*

AN ancient letter began with (1) the writer's name, (2) the recipient's, and (3) a good wish (cf. Ac. xxiii. 26; Ja. i. 1); and St. Paul follows the fashion here. The simple formula runs: "Paul, to all that be in [Rome], grace to you and peace"; but he elaborates it largely, and the elaborations are highly significant, skilfully introducing the argument and defining the threefold issue raised by the Judaists: (1) his apostleship, (2) his Gospel, and (3) his doctrine of universal grace.

1. See how he vindicates his apostleship. First he styles himself (not "a servant" but) "a slave of Jesus Christ"; and this is no self-abasement but a proud boast, referring to a peculiar mode of emancipation prevailing of old. A slave who coveted freedom would hoard his poor perquisite (*peculium*) until he had amassed the price of his redemption. This he would deposit in the temple-treasury, and then his master must accompany him thither and accept it from the priest's hand in presence of witnesses, thus selling his slave to the god. The latter hereby passed into the god's possession. He was the god's property, and his liberty was thenceforward indefeasible. He was the god's slave, "bought," as the phrase was, "for freedom"; and it would have been sacrilege had he ever afterwards been enslaved to another master (cf. 1 Cor. vii. 23; Gal. v. 1, 13). Here is the record of such a transaction as inscribed on the wall of the temple of Apollo at Delphi, dated 200 B.C. and duly witnessed: "Pythian Apollo bought from Sosibios of Amphissa for freedom a female slave, named Nicæa, by race a Roman, for the price of three silver minæ and a half. Former seller according to the law Eumnastos of Amphissa. The price received. And the purchase Nicæa entrusted to Apollo for freedom." Even so was Paul "a slave of Jesus Christ"—"not his own but bought with a price."

"Not your own!" but His ye are,
 Who hath paid a price untold
 For your life, exceeding far
 All earth's store of gems and gold.
 With the precious blood of Christ,
 Ransom-treasure all unpriced,
 Full redemption is procured,
 Full salvation is assured.

Redemption alone, however, did not constitute him an apostle. He had been "called to be an apostle"—called in God's eternal purpose. And the evidence hereof was that he had been "separated" or "set apart unto the Gospel, the Good Tidings, of God"—whether "the good tidings which God sent" or "the good tidings about God." And thereto he had been doubly separated: (1) Like the prophet of old (Jer. i. 5), by the devotion of his godly parents "ere he came forth out of the womb" (cf. Gal. i. 15), and (2) by the Church's ordination (cf. Ac. xiii. 2). In either case his "setting apart" was the realisation in time of his eternal calling. And thus his title to apostleship was threefold; redemption, vocation, consecration.

2. The Gospel was no novel invention, as the Judaists alleged. It was a fulfilment of Israel's long hope, "promised aforetime through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures." And so its theme was "His Son," that is, the Messiah (see exposition of Mt. iii. 17), the Promised Saviour, but a more glorious Messiah than the Jews dreamed. The Son of God whom they expected was no Divine Person but a national deliverer, "born of the seed of David according to the flesh"; but in the Gospel He was (not "declared" but) "defined 'Son of God'" in a larger sense: (1) "in power," by His miraculous ministry (cf. xv. 19), (2) "according to the spirit of holiness," the miracle of a sinless life, and (3) by the crowning miracle of the Resurrection.

3. Even as the Saviour was more glorious, so was His salvation wider, than they had dreamed. It was a universal grace; and therefore must it be preached not to Israel alone but to all mankind. "Through Him we received grace and"—since grace is not earned by works but freely bestowed—"apostleship (not "for obedience to the Faith" but) for the obedience

of faith, the obedience which faith renders, among all the nations."

Nor does he content himself with doctrinal definitions. He was writing to communities which he had never as yet visited ; and, recognising that they might be aggrieved on this score, he would fain disarm them. Mark his tactful and gracious courtesy. (1) He "longed to see them," he says, "that he might impart to them some spiritual gift for their strengthening." Here he pauses and, lest he seem arrogant, gives the sentence another turn : "or rather that we may both be comforted while I am among you by our mutual trust, yours and mine." (2) According to grammatical usage he should have written "mine and yours," as Cardinal Wolsey did, showing himself "a good grammarian but a bad courtier."

In all your writ to Rome, or else
To foreign princes, "Ego et Rex meus"
Was still inscribed ; in which you brought the king
To be your servant.

But the Apostle, ever a gentleman, preferred courtesy to grammar.

I. DOCTRINAL

i. 16-v

THE THESIS

i. 16, 17

16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ : for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

17 *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith : as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

THE thesis is twofold : (1) that salvation is by faith alone and not by works—"to everyone that believeth," "every-one that hath faith" or, in old English (cf. Shak. *Lear*, II. i. 72), "faiths it" ; and (2) that it is for all mankind without distinction—"every one, both the Jew, in the first instance, and the Greek."

It was "for the Jew in the first instance" in the way not of preference but of opportunity, inasmuch as the Jew had been prepared to receive it by the long discipline of his national history ; and even as of old Israel was chosen of God to be His witness on the earth, so should the Jews now show to the Gentiles an example of faith. Therefore it was that wherever the Apostle went preaching the Gospel, he first visited the synagogue and preached it there ; and only when the Jews rejected it did he turn to the Gentiles (cf. Ac. xiii. 14, 46, xxviii. 17-28). Always privilege involves responsibility ; and even as the Jews were first in opportunity, so when they disbelieved, were they first in guilt and incurred a heavier condemnation (cf. ii. 9, 10).

The Apostle's Gospel of Justification by Faith was scorned and derided. To Jews it was "a stumbling-block" and to Greeks "foolishness" (1 Cor. i. 23). But he was not ashamed of it. For it carried its own blessed attestation, in that, wherever it was believed, it proved itself "God's power for salvation." It satisfied the need of sinners seeking to be right with

God. The Pharisees sought by the works of the Law to establish a righteousness of their own ; but in the Gospel “ a righteousness of God is revealed ” ever more fully, “ as faith grows from more to more.”

So the Apostle had found in his own blessed experience after seeking long and vainly to be justified by his own works of righteousness ; and so Luther found anew when, as he climbed Pilate’s stairs at Rome on his naked knees, he too heard that sentence of the ancient prophet (Hab. ii. 4) crying within him : “ The just shall live by faith.” There is no other way ; and howsoever it be disdained in the flush of pride and self-sufficiency, it is thither that the soul must turn at last.

The hour draws near, howe’er delayed and late,
When at the Eternal Gate
We leave the words and works we call our own,
And lift void hands alone
For love to fill. Our nakedness of soul
Brings to that gate no toll ;
Giftless we come to Him who all things gives,
And live because He lives.

THE DEMONSTRATION (i. 18-iv)

1. FAILURE OF THE GENTILES TO ATTAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS

i. 18-32

18 *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness ;*

19 *Because that which may be known of God is manifest *in them ; for God hath shewed it unto them.*

20 *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead ; †so that they are without excuse :*

21 *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful ; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

22 *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,*

23 *And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*

24 *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves :*

25 *Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature ‡more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.*

26 *For this cause God gave them up into vile affections : for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature :*

* Or, to them.

† Or, that they may be.

‡ Or, rather.

27 *And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another ; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.*

28 *And even as they did not like*to retain God in their knowledge God gave them over to †a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient ;*

29 *Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity ; whisperers,*

30 *Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,*

31 *Without understanding, covenant-breakers, ‡without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful :*

32 *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but §have pleasure in them that do them.*

THE demonstration is simple and conclusive. Other ways have been tried, and they have failed ; therefore we are shut up to the way of faith.

Look at the way which the heathen took, and see how they fared. The argument opens with an affirmation of the moral order of the world : “ God’s wrath is evermore revealed from heaven against all impiety and unrighteousness of men who possess the truth in unrighteousness.” Observe the limitation here. Though “ the face of the Lord is against them that do evil ” (Ps. xxxiv. 16), knowledge is the measure of responsibility ; and what knowledge had the heathen ? They had no Law like the Jews, no revelation of the truth ; and it may seem as though this cleared them of guilt and should have exempted them from God’s wrath. But indeed they “ possessed the truth ” ; for though they had no written Law, they had an unwritten law (cf. ii. 14, 15), the revelation of God in Nature, as the Psalmist had recognised (Ps. xix. 1, 2). “ There are

* Or, to acknowledge.

† Or, a mind void of judgment.

‡ or, unsociable.

§ Or, consent with them.

two books," says Sir Thomas Browne, "from which I collect my Divinity: besides the written one of God, another of his servant Nature; that universal and public manuscript, that lies expans'd unto the eyes of all; those that never saw him in the one, have discovered him in the other. This was the scripture and theology of the heathens." It was indeed an imperfect revelation; and see how its limits are here defined. It displayed merely "His godhead" or rather "His divinity." The word occurs only here in the New Testament; and it is sharply distinguished from another which also occurs but once (Col. ii. 9), where the Apostle writes that in Christ "dwelleth all the fulness"—not, as our Version, has it, "of the godhead" but—"of deity bodily." Mark the distinction: In Christ, the Eternal Son Incarnate, and in Him alone, we see "deity"—God Himself; in the works of Nature we see only "divinity"—His qualities and attributes, especially His existence, His power, and His beneficence (cf. Ac. xiv. 17, xvii. 25), meriting our thanks (cf. ver. 21). "For," says Bacon, "as all works do show forth the power and skill of the workman, and not his image; so it is of the works of God, which do show the omnipotency and wisdom of the Maker, but not His image."

Meagre though it was in comparison with the revelation of Grace, the revelation in Nature was sufficient to render the unrighteousness of the heathen inexcusable. Their guilt was that, "though they had recognised God, they did not glorify Him as God or give Him thanks." And see the progress of the tragedy. Even as it was written of old first that "Pharaoh hardened his heart," then that "his heart was hardened," and finally that "the Lord hardened it" (Ex. ix. 34-x. 1), so is it written here first that, "though they recognised God, they did not glorify Him"; and then the active becomes passive: "they were stricken with futility in their reasonings, and their unperceiving heart was darkened." It was the operation of an inexorable and universal law. Obdurately closing their eyes, they went blind. They would not see, and so it came to pass that they could not see (cf. exposition of Mt. xii. 31, 32; Mk. iii. 28, 29).

The plague of heathendom was idolatry. And it was of

two sorts (ver. 23)—the Greek worship of the human and Egyptian animal-worship. The Greek deities were magnified men and women, surpassing mortals not alone in strength and beauty but in evil passions; and since a man is ever made “after his God’s image,” the Greeks grew licentious, and the votaries of the Egyptian cults bestial. Terrible as is the Apostle’s indictment, it is studiously restrained; and incomparably darker is the picture presented on the pages of contemporary pagan literature not alone by satirists but by grave historians. The evidence of his charges lay before the eyes of his readers. Consider only these: (1) “Whisperers.” They would think of the informers (*delatores*), in Juvenal’s phrase, “cutting honest throats by whispers.” The veriest trifle—a word, a look, a gesture—sufficed for a charge of treason, and “suspicion was equivalent to proof; trial to condemnation.” (2) “Inventors of evil things.” Old vices had lost their relish; and, says Tacitus, new vices were invented and called by names hitherto unknown. (3) “Without natural affection.” Weakly or superfluous children were “exposed”—cast out to die. It was no rare atrocity but a constant practice; and one realises the horror of it on reading a papyrus-letter where a husband writes home to his wife from Alexandria in the year 1 B.C.: “If—may it go well with you!—you bear a child, if it be a male, let it live, if a female, expose it.” It is very significant that in neither Greek nor Latin was there a word for “home.” It is love that makes home—“home, sweet home”; and love is an art which the ancient world, so wise and brilliant, hardly knew.

2. FAILURE OF THE JEWS (ii-iii. 20)

(I) THE INDICTMENT

ii. 1-16

1 *Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest : for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself ; for thou that judgest doest the same things.*

2 *But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.*

3 *And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God ?*

4 *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering ; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance ?*

5 *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God ;*

6 *Who will render to every man according to his deeds :*

7 *To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life :*

8 *But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,*

9 *Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the *Gentile ;*

10 *But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the †Gentile :*

11 *For there is no respect of persons with God.*

* Gr. *Greek*.

† Gr. *Greek*.

12 *For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law : and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law ;*

13 *(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.*

14 *For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves :*

15 *Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, *their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts †the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)*

16 *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*

THIS Jewish readers would relish the Apostle's indictment of despised heathendom ; but now, pursuing his argument, he declares that despite their vaunted superiority and their larger opportunity the Jews had failed no less disastrously. "Wherein thou judgest thy neighbour, thou pronouncest judgment on thyself ; for thou art practising the same things—thou that judgest." Incredible as it might seem, it was but an example of the deceitfulness of the human heart and the flattering unctions which we so readily lay to our souls (vers. 3, 4). As Thomas Hardy puts it, "we generally think we shall be lucky ourselves, though all the world before us, in the same situation, have been otherwise." And sometimes it is that, as it is written (Eccl. viii. 11), "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is emboldened in them to do evil," mistaking forbearance for indifference and "not knowing" or, as the original rather signifies, "ignoring the fact that God's kindness is leading them unto repentance."

Against such self-delusion the Apostle enunciates two stern truths : (1) the certainty and impartiality of God's judgment (vers. 5-11) and (2) the universality of moral obligation (vers. 12-16). Observe the latter. As the Apostle wrote it in the

* Or, *the conscience witnessing with them.*

† Or, *between themselves.*

first instance, the sentence runs simply. "As many as sinned without the Law, without the Law will also perish; and as many as sinned within the Law, in terms of the Law will be judged. For it is not the hearers of the Law that are righteous with God; no, it is the doers of the Law that will be accounted righteous on the Day when God judgeth the secrets of men according to my Gospel through Jesus Christ." The intervening verses (14, 15) are parenthetical. See their *raison d'être*. In affirming the universality of moral obligation the Apostle's special design was to censure the vain confidence of the Jews that the mere possession of the Law differentiated them from "lesser breeds without the Law"; and he insisted that all who had sinned, whether without the Law or within it, were condemned. On perusing what he had written he perceived a possible objection: While it is just that the Jews who sinned despite the Law's restraint, should be condemned, is it just that the Gentiles who lack it, should be held guilty? And so he added a marginal note, recalling the truth (cf. i. 19, 20) that, though without the revelation of the Law, the Gentiles had the revelation of Nature and thus were without excuse. "For, when Gentiles who have no Law do by natural instinct the Law's requirements, these men, though they have no Law, are a Law to themselves, since they display the Law's work written on their hearts, their conscience bearing witness with it, and their reasonings debating in condemnation or defence." Observe the picturesque imagery: a law-court with statute, witness, prosecutor, advocate, judge. The Unwritten Law is the statute, Conscience the witness, their reasonings prosecutor and advocate, God the judge.

(2) THE PROOF

ii. 17-29

17 *Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,*

18 *And knowest his will, and *approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law ;*

19 *And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,*

20 *An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.*

21 *Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself ? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal ?*

22 *Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery ? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege ?*

23 *Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God ?*

24 *For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.*

25 *For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law : but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.*

26 *Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision ?*

27 *And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law ?*

28 *For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly ; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh :*

* Or, triest the things that differ.

29 *But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

IN view of their assurance of their own righteousness it was an amazing charge that the Apostle preferred when he pronounced the Jews no less guilty than the despised Gentiles ; and to show that he spoke in all seriousness he introduces his proof thereof with a recital of their boastful pretensions. "Thou bearest the grand name of 'Jew,'" signifying "praised" (cf. Gen. xlix. 8). "Thou" not merely "retest" but "pillowest thy head upon the Law"—the very phrase of the ancient commentator on the Homeric poems where he tells how such was Alexander the Great's admiration of them that he carried the volume with him even on his campaigns and kept it with his sword under his pillow while he slept, "pillowing his head upon it." "Thou boastest in God and readest His will and"—what ? The phrase of the original is ambiguous, signifying either (1) "proving" or "testing the things that differ" or (2) "approving the things that are excellent." The former is its meaning here—a reference to Rabbinical casuistry (see exposition of Mt. xxiii. 16–22), so ingenious in moral evasion: "thou art skilled in casuistry, having the Law by heart." Then he quotes some of the high-sounding designations of the Rabbis : "a guide of the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, an instructor of the unperceiving, a teacher of babes, having the embodiment of knowledge and truth in the Law," even as the finished statue is the embodiment of the sculptor's ideal.

With a reticence which evinces not only how he blushed for his people's shame but how notorious their misdeeds were, now as of old (cf. 2 Sam. xii. 14 ; Is. lii. 5 ; Ezk. xxxvi. 20 ; Neh. v. 9) bringing dishonour on their holy faith, the Apostle sets over against those high pretensions three definite and damning charges : theft, fornication, and sacrilege. Suffice it to recall how our Lord had upbraided the Scribes and Pharisees with rapacity and uncleanness (see exposition of Mt. xxiii. 14 25 ; cf. the story of Susanna and the Elders). And what of the charge of sacrilege, literally "robbery of temples"

(*hierosylia*)? The word occurs in the New Testament only once again (Ac. xix. 37), where our Version has "robbery of churches"—a significant parallel; for, whereas robbery of temples occurred to the town clerk of Ephesus as an offence likely to have been committed by the two Jews whom the mob was mishandling, it appears how common it was for their co-religionists to exhibit thus gainfully their hatred of idolatry. And their repute among the Gentiles is illustrated by the prevailing notion that the name of their capital was originally *Hierosyla* ("temple-robber") and they had altered it to *Hierosolyma*; and so grave was the scandal that, as their historian Josephus records, the Sanhedrin deemed it expedient to enact a law that "no one must rob alien temples or reset a treasure dedicated to any god."

(3) JEWISH OBJECTIONS

iii. I-20

1 *What advantage then hath the Jew ? or what profit is there of circumcision ?*

2 *Much every way : chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*

3 *For what if some did not believe ? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect ?*

4 *God forbid : yea, let God be true, but every man a liar ; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*

5 *But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say ? Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance ? (I speak as a man)*

6 *God forbid : for then how shall God judge the world ?*

7 *For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory ; why yet am I also judged as a sinner ?*

8 *And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come ? whose damnation is just.*

9 *What then ? are we better than they ? No, in no wise : for we have before *proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin ;*

10 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one :*

11 *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

12 *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

13 *Their throat is an open sepulchre ; with their tongues they have used deceit ; the poison of asps is under their lips :*

* Gr. charged.

14 *Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness :*

15 *Their feet are swift to shed blood :*

16 *Destruction and misery are in their ways :*

17 *And the way of peace have they not known :*

18 *There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

19 *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law : that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become *guilty before God.*

20 *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight : for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

NOW that the Apostle has demonstrated the equal failure of Gentiles and Jews, the next step in the argument is an exhibition of the one sufficient remedy; but here he pauses to consider a succession of Jewish objections—the difficulties which had presented themselves to his own Jewish mind when, taught by bitter experience the futility of Pharisaism, he was feeling his way to the peace which he had found in Christ.

1. The question of Jewish prestige (vers. 1, 2). What of this if Jews and Gentiles are alike condemned? “Much,” he answers, “from every point of view. Primarily because they were entrusted with the Oracles of God (cf. Ac. vii. 38).” It is Israel’s imperishable glory that she was the depositary of the revelation which culminated in the Christian Redemption. The world is evermore her debtor.

Remember ! Jesus was for you
A weary, wandering, outcast Jew.

2. The question of God’s faithfulness (vers. 3, 4) “Very well : if some proved unfaithful, will their unfaithfulness invalidate the faithfulness of God ? ” It was a fond belief of the later Jews that, since they were the children of Abraham and God had made a covenant with Abraham and his seed after him, they were for ever secure (see exposition of Mt. iii. 9 and Jo. viii. 39). God

* Or, *subject to the judgment of God.*

was irrevocably bound by His promise. Here the Apostle does not stay to argue. He simply (1) dismisses the preposterous claim with his accustomed formula of indignant repudiation, not "God forbid!" but "Away with the idea!" literally "May it not be!" the negative of "So be it!" which serves in the Greek Version of the Old Testament as the rendering of the Hebrew *Amen*; and (2) affirms God's inviolate faithfulness, quoting the Psalmist's authority according to the Greek Version (Ps. li. 4): "that Thou mightest be found righteous in Thy causes and prevail in Thy pleading," where God is represented as on His trial, meeting man's cavilling and triumphantly vindicating His providence.

3. The question of God's right to condemn (vers. 5, 6). Since "our unrighteousness," like a dark background to a picture, "commendeth God's righteousness," why should He (not "take vengeance" but) "inflict wrath," reprobating the evil which serves as a foil to His transcendent perfection? Truly an impious argument; and, with an apology for repeating it ("it is a mere human language that I am using"), the Apostle contemptuously dismisses it. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

4. The question of "doing evil that good may come" (vers. 7, 8). This is not a Jewish argument. It is a mischievous Jewish perversion of the Apostle's Gospel of Justification by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law, all the more grievous to him that too many of his converts so reasoned, making free grace a pretext for sinning the more that God might be the more glorified. Hence the sternness of his retort: "Their doom is righteous." Men who reasoned thus were no disciples of his.

5. The petulant question of an opponent worsted in argument yet loath to acknowledge defeat (vers. 9-20). Observe how it runs: not, as our Version has it, "Are we better than they?" but "Are we worse than they?" "Is this," asks the discomfited controversialist, "your conclusion—that we Jews are actually worse than the heathen?" "Not at all," answers the Apostle. "Not that we are worse, but that all alike have failed and stand condemned. For our initial charge was that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin." And in proof hereof he adduces an

array of scriptural testimonies (Pss. xiv. 1-3, v. 9, cxi. 3, x. 7 ; Is. lix. 7, 8 ; Ps. xxxvi. 1), proclaiming the guilt of our fallen race. And, lest it should be urged that these applied only to heathendom, he remarks that they are written in the Law, and "every word of the Law is spoken to those within the Law (cf. ii. 12)."

3. GOD'S WAY OF JUSTIFICATION

iii. 21-31

21 *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets ;*

22 *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe : for there is no difference :*

23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ;*

24 *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus :*

25 *Whom God hath *set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the †remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ;*

26 *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness : that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

27 *Where is boasting then ? It is excluded. By what law ? of works ? Nay : but by the law of faith.*

28 *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*

29 *Is he the God of the Jews only ? is he not also of the Gentiles ? Yes, of the Gentiles also :*

30 *Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.*

31 *Do we then make void the law through faith ? God forbid : yea, we establish the law.*

HERE the Apostle's argument attains its goal. His thesis was that faith in Christ is the only way of justification ; and this he has established by a process of elimination, showing how every other way has failed. The way of heathendom has failed ; and no less has the way of the Jews, and their

* Or, *foreordained*.

† Or, *passing over*.

peculiar privileges have but aggravated their guilt. Thus are we shut up to God's way as revealed in the Gospel. "As the case stands, apart from the Law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being attested by the Law and the Prophets; a righteousness of God, however,"—mark its peculiarity—"through faith in Jesus Christ, reaching all who have faith." All such, whether Jews or Gentiles; "for there is no distinction. For all sinned and feel their want"—the word used of the prodigal in the far country when he awoke to a sense of his destitution (Lk. xv. 14)—"of the glory of God," the glad radiance of His presence. "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it find rest in Thee."

There is only one remedy—that we should be "justified freely, accounted righteous for naught," not by our own works but "by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." His grace is God's motive for justifying sinners, and Christ's redemption the means which He employs; and the Apostle enlarges hereon in a noble passage sadly marred in our Version. Look at the word rendered "propitiation." It occurs in the New Testament in only one other passage (Heb. ix. 5), where it is rightly rendered "the Mercy-seat"—the meaning which it bears in the Greek Version of the Old Testament, in the writings of Philo and other Jewish theologians, and in the early Christian literature. It can mean nothing else here. And what was the Mercy-seat? In the ancient Tabernacle there stood in the Holy of Holies, the inner chamber of the Sanctuary, the Ark of the Covenant, containing those sacred memorials, the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod, and the tables of the Law, and covered with a lid which bore at either end two golden cherubim overshadowing it with their outstretched wings. And above it, between the cherubim, rested the Shekinah, the Cloud of the Lord's presence (cf. Ex. xxv. 17-22).

This was the Mercy-seat where, said the Lord when He charged Moses to make it, "I will meet with thee, and commune with thee." When the Tabernacle gave place to the Temple, the Mercy-seat remained; but at the destruction of the Temple the Shekinah vanished, and the faith of the later Jews was that when the Messiah came, it would return as of

old (see exposition of Jo. i. 14). And so indeed it came to pass beyond their dream. Christ is our Mercy-seat ; and all that the Mercy-seat was for sinners of old, He is for us—all this and more. For, whereas it was hidden in the Holy of Holies, which the people durst not enter but only the High Priest on their behalf once every year on the great Day of Atonement (cf. Heb. ix. 25), “ God set Him forth as a Mercy-seat,” continually accessible to every needy penitent. And even as the Mercy-seat of old was sprinkled with sacrificial blood (cf. Lev. xvi. 15), so is ours. Observe that it is grammatically illegitimate to construe “ in His blood ” with “ faith,” as though the object of faith were His blood and not Himself. It goes with “ Mercy-seat,” defining the condition or furnishing thereof. And thus the sentence runs : “ Whom God set forth as a Mercy-seat through faith, besprinkled with His blood.”

The redemption that is in Christ Jesus is as wide as the world’s sin, covering not alone the present and the future but the past. See how the Apostle proclaims this truth. It is lost in our Version, where it is written that our blood-besprinkled Mercy-seat “ declares His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past.” The fault lies in the word “ remission.” The original signifies “ pretermission.” And what is the difference ? “ Remit ” means “ forgive,” literally “ let go ” or “ release ”—a full and final absolution ; whereas “ pretermit ” is to “ let go for the meantime,” pending a future settlement. It is precisely the old Scots word “ frist,” which Sir Walter has commemorated. “ Well,” says the old Jacobite in *Redgauntlet*, “ we may have our day next : what is fristed is not forgiven ; they think us all dead and buried, but——” Ere the Saviour came and made atonement for the sin of the world, there was indeed mercy but there was no remission—only pretermission (cf. Ac. xvii. 30) ; and so it is written : “ Whom God set forth as a Mercy-seat through faith, besprinkled with His blood, for a demonstration of His righteousness on account of the pretermission of the sins which had been committed aforetime during the forbearance of God.”

And thus in Christ there is redemption for all, Jews and Gentiles alike, on the sole ground of faith, “ seeing that God is

one, and He will account the circumcised righteous by (literally "from," "out of") faith, and the uncircumcised through "or "by means of faith." Observe the subtle distinction. "Out of" denotes the *source*, and "by means of" the *instrument* of justification. Faith and faith alone is the source; and the Law, that blessed aid vouchsafed to the Jews for their instruction and guidance, was only an instrument, "a means of grace." It was not the Law that justified them, but the faith which it fostered in their hearts. They were justified "out of faith." And what of the Gentiles, the uncircumcised? They had no Law, no instrument, no means of grace; but if they had faith, they needed none; they had the grace without the means. They were justified "through their faith." It served at once as the source and as the instrument of their justification.

4. SCRIPTURALNESS OF THE DOCTRINE

iv

1 *What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found ?*

2 *For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory ; but not before God.*

3 *For what saith the scripture ? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*

4 *Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.*

5 *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*

6 *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,*

7 *Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*

8 *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*

9 *Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also ? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.*

10 *How was it then reckoned ? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision ? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.*

11 *And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised : that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised ; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also :*

12 *And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.*

13 *For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

14 *For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect :*

15 *Because the law worketh wrath : for where no law is, there is no transgression.*

16 *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace ; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed ; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham ; who is the father of us all,*

17 *(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,)*
**before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.*

18 *Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.*

19 *And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb :*

20 *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief ; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God ;*

21 *And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

22 *And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.*

23 *Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him ;*

24 *But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ;*

25 *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

* Or, like unto him.

THE Apostle has just closed his statement of the doctrine of Justification by Faith with the claim that it did not "invalidate the Law" but on the contrary "established it." And now he makes this good. He demonstrates the scripturalness of the doctrine by an appeal to the case of Abraham—an effective appeal, forasmuch as Abraham was Israel's spiritual father and had bequeathed to his children all their religious heritage. "What, then, shall we say of Abraham, the forefather of our race?"

1. It was not by works that he was justified but by faith (vers. 2-8). "If it was by works that Abraham was accounted righteous, he hath something to boast of. But he hath nothing in relation to God; for what saith the Scripture (Gen. xv. 6)? 'Abraham had faith in God, and it was imputed to him as righteousness.'" He did not work for it; else it would have been the payment of a debt. It was free grace, God's response to his faith. And there is no other way of justification, as David also testifies (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2). How did he obtain "the ultimate blessing, which hath no successor"? "It is not written," says the Abbé de Saint-Cyran (1581-1632), "that he is blessed who hath never sinned, but he to whom God imputeth not iniquity."

2. Circumcision was not the ground but merely the seal of his justification (vers. 9-12). The order with Abraham was (1) faith, (2) justification, and (3), as the seal thereof, circumcision; whereas the Judaists ignored faith and put circumcision first, making it the condition of justification and thus excluding the uncircumcised Gentiles. See how the Apostle defines the truth (vers. 11, 12): "He received 'the sign' (cf. Gen. xvii. 11) of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness which his faith, while uncircumcised, won him; that he might be the father of all who have faith though in a state of uncircumcision, that righteousness may be imputed to them, and a circumcised father for those who do not only hold by circumcision but tread in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham displayed while still uncircumcised."

3. It was not by the Law that Abraham obtained the Promise (cf. Gen. xxii. 17, 18) but by faith (vers. 13-25). The very

idea of "promise" implies faith—faith in its fulfilment; and what comes by law is not promised but earned: it is not grace but payment. In terms of law there is nothing for sinners but wrath; and therefore the promise is "on the score of faith, that it may be in terms of grace."

It was faith with Abraham from first to last. He never saw the fulfilment of the promise, and the facts seemed dead against it; yet such was his faith that he set these at naught. "On hope where hope there was none he rested his faith; and without weakening in his faith he contemplated his own body with its vitality gone, since he was some hundred years old, and the devitalisation of Sarah's womb. In view of the promise of God he never wavered for lack of faith. Nay, his faith put power into him, and he gave glory to God, satisfied that what He hath promised He hath power also to do."

A DEVOTIONAL INTERLUDE

V

1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ :*

2 *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

3 *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also : knowing that tribulation worketh patience ;*

4 *And patience, experience ; and experience, hope :*

5 *And hope maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

6 *For when we were yet without strength, *in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

7 *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die : yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.*

8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

9 *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

10 *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

11 *And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the †atonement.*

12 *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, ‡for that all have sinned :*

13 *(For until the law sin was in the world : but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*

* Or, according to the time.

† Or, reconciliation.

‡ Or, in whom.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

17 For if *by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

18 Therefore as †by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so ‡by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE Apostle has now demonstrated his thesis (cf. i. 16, 17). It still remains that he should consider various problems arising out of his doctrine; but ere addressing himself thereto he pauses here to survey the believer's goodly heritage.

1. The Privileges of the Justified (vers. 1-11). He begins with an exhortation: "Being then accounted righteous on the score of faith, (not "we have" but) let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Realise your privileges; appropriate them; and rejoice in them. And what are those privileges?

(1) A standing in the royal court of Heaven (vers. 1, 2a).

* Or, by one offence.

† Or, by one offence.

‡ Or, by one righteousness.

"Access" in the original signifies presentation at court, introduction to the royal presence (cf. Eph. ii. 18, iii. 12). Christ is our sponsor, who thus "brings us to God" (cf. 1 Pet. iii. 18): "through whom we have gained the *entrée* by faith into this grace wherein we stand."

(2) A glorious prospect (ver. 2*b*). Our acceptance with God is but a foretaste of the glory which awaits us. Therefore "let us make the hope of the glory of God a ground for rejoicing."

The best is yet to be,
The last of life for which the first was made.

(3) A present triumph (vers. 3, 4). It is easy to rejoice when things go pleasantly with us, but

A hope so great and so divine
May trials well endure.

Therefore "let us make the hope of the glory of God a ground for rejoicing; and not only so, but let us also rejoice amid the tribulations." For, even as fire tries gold, so tribulation, bravely supported, tries manhood, bringing out the best that is in us and fitting us for high destinies. "Tribulation worketh out endurance, and endurance approbation, and approbation hope." One who has stood the test, faces the future with a high heart.

But what assurance is there that it is a substantial hope and not merely a fond illusion such as cheered the seaman's wife in *The Pleasures of Hope*, still watching distraught for the return of the perished ship?

Mercy gave, to charm the sense of woe,
Ideal peace, that Truth could ne'er bestow;
Warm on her heart the joys of Fancy beam,
And aimless Hope delights her darkest dream.
Oft when yon moon has climb'd the midnight sky,
And the lone sea-bird wakes its wildest cry,
Pil'd on the steep, her blazing faggots burn
To hail the bark that never can return;
And still she waits, but scarce forbears to weep
That constant love can linger on the deep.

May not the Christian hope be nothing more than even such a flattering dream, born of the heart's desire? Nay, says the Apostle, "the hope maketh not ashamed" (cf. Pss. xxii. 5, xxv. 20, xxxiv. 5). It is no mere subjective fantasy: it is indubitably attested by an objective guarantee.

And what is the guarantee? "The love of God hath been poured forth in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given unto us" (cf. Ac. ii. 33). It may seem as though this were still a merely subjective emotion; but remember what is the Holy Spirit's office. It is to testify of Christ, to guide us into all the truth, to glorify Christ by taking of His and declaring it unto us (cf. Jo. xv. 26, xvi. 13, 14). And He confirms our hope by revealing to us the wonder of that Infinite Sacrifice whereon it rests. Unfortunately the Apostle's argument is here confused by scribal corruption. The occasion thereof is the intrusion of another marginal note of the Apostle (vers. 7, 8. Cf. exposition of ii. 14, 15) and the consequent manipulation of the text by copyists in order to smooth out the ragged jointure. All is clear when it is recognised that those two verses form a parenthesis and that (1) "for when" (ver. 6) should be "for if when" and (2) "then" (ver. 9) should be omitted. Thus the passage runs: "For if Christ, while we were still weak, in due season died for the impious, much more, being accounted righteous now that we are sprinkled with His blood (cf. iii. 25), shall we be saved through Him (or "it") from the wrath (cf. i. 18). For if," continues the Apostle in a similarly balanced sentence, "being enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved in His life."

And now look at the parenthesis (vers. 7, 8). It is an afterthought. On perusing what he had written he would fain strengthen his argument; and so he added this marginal comment: "Hardly for a righteous man will one die: it is for the good man that perhaps one even hath the hardihood to die. But God commendeth His own love toward us inasmuch as, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Observe the distinction between "righteous" and "good." A righteous man is one like Cato the Censor, honourable, just, paying his

debt and withal exacting his due to the last farthing, rigid, austere, pitiless, one worthy of admiration but impossible to love. "Thank Heaven," says Thackeray, "I never thought so ill of women as to suppose them to be just." A good man, again, is one like Barnabas (cf. Ac. xi. 24), kindly, sympathetic, generous, sweetly reasonable, one whom all must love. And here is the marvel: We were not "good," we were not even "righteous"; we were "sinners," nay "enemies"; yet Christ died for us. There lies the objective guarantee of the Christian hope. A love like that is limitless, transcending imagination's farthest reach. "All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist."

This then, the argument concludes, is our blessed estate: "being reconciled, and not only reconciled but also rejoicing in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."

2. The entail of death and the entail of life (vers. 12-21). Here the Apostle takes up the thought of "reconciliation" and enlarges upon it, showing how sin alienated us from God and Christ restored the lost fellowship. His argument turns on that word "imputation" (ver. 13); and in the profound and mysterious yet indubitable principle which it expresses, lies the secret of both the ruin and the redemption of our race. It is a high theme, and his rugged sentences continually interrupted by digressions—"fancies that broke through language and escaped"—betray how he laboured for utterance as thought crowded upon thought.

The argument begins with a proposition: "As through one man (Adam) sin entered into the world and through sin death, and thus death spread to all men, for that all sinned——" Here he digresses, and resumes after an interval (ver. 18). Had he completed the sentence, it would have run: "even so through one man (Christ, the Second Adam) righteousness entered into the world and through righteousness life." The proposition is twofold: (1) It was Adam's sin that, in Milton's phrase, "brought death into the world and all our woe." Had he not sinned, his descendants would not have died; (2) Christ's righteousness has repaired the ruin and removed the curse of death. And on both

sides it is an amazing and, it would seem, incredible proposition. For (1), since on the geological evidence of fossil remains there was death on the earth long ere man appeared, it did not originate with Adam's sin. And (2) in undoing the ruin of Adam's sin Christ did not remove death, since all still die, believers and unbelievers alike.

What becomes then of the Apostle's argument? The answer was furnished by that wise and gracious teacher, the Puritan theologian, William Ames, best known by his Latinised name Amesius. "The punishment inflicted on man for sin," he says, "is death (Gen. ii. 17; Rom. v. 12). This death is miserable privation of life—privation of life not simple and bare but conjoined with subjection to misery." That is to say, on the Apostle's lips "death" signifies not the mere process of dissolution but its attendant misery, the anguish wherewith sin has invested it. And this is no novel distinction. Philosophers, poets, preachers, and moralists in all ages have recognised it, and acclaimed the dissolution of the body as a divine ordinance, beneficent and beautiful—"according to nature," says Marcus Aurelius, "and nothing is evil which is according to nature"; "a law of nature," says Seneca, "a tribute and office of mortals, the remedy of all evils." "It cannot," says Schiller, "be an evil; for it is universal." "All," says Addison, "that nature has prescribed must be good; and as death is natural to us, it is absurdity to fear it."

And so teaches the New Testament with a larger assurance than philosophers or moralists ever knew. Wherefore was it that our Lord took our humanity upon Him and experienced its mortality? It was "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, and deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). The curse of sin is not the physical process of dissolution but the terror wherewith it has invested that ordinance of the Creator, which is nothing else than, in St. Bernard's phrase, "the gate of life," "the awakening of the soul," says Baron Bunsen, "to a higher life," its passage to a life more abundant. And this is the precious service which our Blessed Lord has rendered to the children of men: for all believers He

has stripped the natural ordinance of the gloom and terror wherewith sin has invested it, and made it once more what it was in the Creator's purpose—a "falling on sleep" to awake in the light of His face.

O for a death from sharp alarms
And bitter memories free :
A gentle death in God's own arms,
Whose dear Son died for me !

And now see the Apostle's argument. The grim terror of death is the curse which sin has brought ; and its universality proves that sin also is universal. But here a problem arises. There is no guilt where there is no knowledge. As he has previously affirmed (iii. 20), "by law is the knowledge of sin" ; and "sin is not imputed when there is no law." On this reckoning, while it was right that the curse should light on Adam, since he sinned with full knowledge, regardless of the divine prohibition, it should not have rested on his posterity so long as they had no law. But what is the fact ? It lay upon all the generations betwixt Adam and Moses, the lawgiver ; and not merely on such as had the light of nature, the law written on the heart (cf. i. 20, ii. 14, 15), and thus "sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," but on every living creature—not alone offenceless beasts but infants with "no knowledge between good and evil" and idiots bereft of the kindly light of reason.

Hence it follows that it is not merely personal but imputed sin that brings the curse ; and why should God deal so terribly with men, so terribly and surely so unfairly, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children," punishing the guiltless for the guilty ? Remember here that lesson which Bishop Butler has inculcated—that the difficulties of revealed religion are never peculiar thereto but present themselves equally in the order of nature. It is not merely a theological dogma but a grim fact of experience that the innocent suffer for the guilty. Children suffer for their parents' sin in accordance with Darwin's law of heredity ; and not only so, but by reason of the mysterious principle which science designates the solidarity of the race, "no man," as St. Paul has it, "liveth to himself," and "if one

member suffer, all the members suffer with it." "So deeply inherent is it," says George Eliot, "in this life of ours that men have to suffer for each other's sins, so inevitably diffusive is human suffering, that even justice makes its victims, and we can conceive no retribution that does not spread beyond its mark in pulsations of unmerited pain." It is a law of the moral order, and what avails it to cry out against the constitution of the universe. Our wisdom lies rather in adapting ourselves thereto.

Science simply asserts the stern fact, and affords us no consolation ; but here the Scriptures come to our aid. For they discover to us a smiling face beneath this frowning providence. They remind us that the operation of the law of heredity has two sides, involving not alone an entail of evil but also an entail of good ; and side by side with the imputation of our first parent's sin and the sin of all our succeeding ancestry stands the imputation of Christ's righteousness and the righteousness of all the faithful who have gone before us. Hence it emerges that the very principle which on the one side works our ruin, is on the other working our redemption. There are two streams pouring through the life of humanity—the poisoned stream which issued from the First Adam, gathering volume from generation to generation, and the healing stream which issued from the Second Adam—"the stream Thy flowing wounds supply." And the triumph is assured, forasmuch as the stream of life is the stronger and must prevail. "There is a difference between the trespass and the gift of grace. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more the grace of God and the beneficence in grace—the grace of the One Man, Jesus Christ—overflowed to the many. And there is a difference between the result of the one's sinning and the benefaction. For the judgment was of one to condemnation ; whereas the gift of grace was of many offences to acquittal" (vers. 15, 16).

II. APOLOGETIC

vi-xi

I. MORAL ISSUES

vi

1 *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*

2 *God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

3 *Know ye not, that so many of us as ^{*}were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*

4 *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

5 *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

6 *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

7 *For he that is dead is [†]freed from sin.*

8 *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:*

9 *Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*

10 *For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*

11 *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

12 *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

13 *Neither yield ye your members as [‡]instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are*

^{*} Or, *are*.

[†] Gr. *justified*.

[‡] Gr. *arms, or, weapons*.

alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 *For sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

15 *What then ? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace ? God forbid.*

16 *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey ; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness ?*

17 *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine *which was delivered you.*

18 *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

19 *I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh : for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity ; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*

20 *For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free †from righteousness.*

21 *What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed ? for the end of those things is death.*

22 *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

23 *For the wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

NOW that he has demonstrated his doctrine of Justification by Faith the Apostle proceeds to consider certain moral issues as these had presented themselves to his own mind at the crisis of his spiritual experience and as they would present themselves also to the minds of his Jewish readers. Their consideration was the more imperative that not merely were they a stumbling-block to earnest Jews but they lent themselves then, as they lend themselves still, to a miserable perversion of evangelical truth.

* Gr. *whereunto ye were delivered.*

† Gr. *to righteousness.*

1. A pretext for continuing in sin (vers. 1-14). "Are we to continue in sin, that grace may multiply?"—as though a mendicant should account himself meritorious forasmuch as he affords opportunity for beneficence. It was a poor quibble; and it proves how grieved the Apostle was by so shameful a perversion of his Gospel of grace that he has already mentioned it *en passant* with indignant scorn (cf. iii. 7, 8). And now he reverts to it and confronts it with his profound conception of the mystical union of the believer with Christ as pictured in the Sacrament of Baptism according to the mode of immersion, one of the three modes practised in the Apostolic Church. Remember, runs the argument, the significance of our washing in "the laver of regeneration" (Tit. iii. 5 R.V. marg.). We died with Christ, and our immersion was a symbol of our burial with Him: "buried with Him through our baptism into His death." And our emergence from the water was a symbol of our rising again from the dead with Him, "that even as Christ was raised from the dead, through the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life." Thus are we united with Christ at every stage of His redemptive career. We die with Him, are buried with Him, are raised with Him, and live with Him. And "we who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?"

This doctrine of the believer's union with Christ is no mere devout fancy. It is the confession of an ineffable yet indubitable and blessed experience. "There are natures," says our English novelist, "in which, if they love us, we are conscious of having a sort of baptism and consecration: they bind us over to rectitude and purity by their pure belief about us; and our sins become that worst kind of sacrilege which tears down the invisible altar of trust." "One soul in two bodies" is Aristotle's definition of friendship; "Friends," says William Penn, "are true Twins in Soul." And "what a Friend we have in Jesus!" To know His love is to be "planted together with Him," welded with Him as the graft is welded with the stem.

2. An evasion of moral obligation (vers. 15-23). "Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace?"—the heresy afterwards defined as "antinomianism." In apostolic days it was advocated by the Nicolaitans (cf. Rev. ii. 6, 15) who

drew a distinction between "spiritual men" and "carnal," and claimed it as the privilege of the former that, since they belonged to the realm of the spirit, the flesh was for them "a thing indifferent," and they were at liberty to indulge its passions as they would. Being "in the spirit," they were superior to law. Their successors in post-Reformation days were "the Spirituals," known in England in Bunyan's time as "the Ranters." Their first leader was Johann Agricola, a degenerate disciple of Luther who indignantly reprobated his doctrine that "whatsoever be a man's life and howsoever impure, yet he is justified if only he believe the promises of the Gospel." "That poisoned doctrine of the Antinomians proceedeth mildly; flesh and blood relisheth it well; it is sweet; it maketh people rude and secure; it will produce much mischief."

The Apostle's answer is that we belong to the master whom we serve, and we cannot be God's if we are serving sin. The evidence that we are His is the transference of our allegiance. "Ye were once slaves of sin, but ye yielded hearty obedience to the standard of teaching whereunto ye were given over" (ver. 17). And who that has experienced the new, would wish to resume the old allegiance? "What was the fruit that ye had then? Things whereof ye are now ashamed; for the end of those things is death." And herewith he clinches his argument with a memorable epigram. He has charged us (vers. 13, 14) to "present our members not as weapons of unrighteousness unto sin but as weapons of righteousness unto God." Fight God's battle, he means. Of course you will: "sin will not be your lord." It is a duty of honour; "for ye are not under law but under grace." *Noblesse oblige*. Generously entreated, you will generously respond. And now at the close he reverts to the military metaphor. In the original "wages" means here the soldiers' pay (cf. Lk. iii. 14), and "gift" the donative which after the battle the general awarded to such as had played the hero. "Sin's pay is death, but God's largesse is life eternal in Christ Jesus our Lord."

2. THE POSITION OF THE LAW

vii. I-25a

1 *Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth ?*

2 *For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth ; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.*

3 *So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress : but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law ; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.*

4 *Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*

5 *For when we were in the flesh, the *motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*

6 *But now we are delivered from the law, †that being dead wherein we were held ; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.*

7 *What shall we say then ? Is the law sin ? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law : for I had not known ‡lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

8 *But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.*

9 *For I was alive without the law once : but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

10 *And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.*

11 *For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.*

* Gr. passions.

† Or, being dead to that.

‡ Or, concupiscence.

12 *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*

13 *Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.*

14 *For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

15 *For that which I do I *allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*

16 *If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.*

17 *Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

18 *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*

19 *For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.*

20 *Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

21 *I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.*

22 *For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:*

23 *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

24 *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from †the body of this death?*

25a *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

CONTINUING his apologetic, the Apostle now passes from perversions of his doctrine to consider how it affected the ancient order; and first he discusses its bearing upon the Jewish Law. The difficulty here for devout Jews was that, since the Gospel proclaimed that sinners were justified not by the works of the Law but by faith in Christ, it set the Law aside and divested it of its sacred authority.

* Gr. *know*.

† Or, *this body of death*.

His answer is the enunciation of a legal principle ; and it should be observed that he adopts here a playful tone. " I am talking," he says with gentle sarcasm, " to people who know what law means." So it might appear from their stout insistence on the permanence of their ancient Law, but all the while they were " ignoring the fact " (cf. ii. 4, vi. 3) that, just because it was a law, it could not be permanent. For a law is instituted for the regulation of an existing situation, and when the situation ceases, the law falls into abeyance. Thus death cancels all bonds ; and here the Apostle adduces the example of the marriage-law : " The woman who is under a husband is bound by law to the living husband ; but if the husband die, the law which held her to him is invalidated." And so it is with the believer by reason of his union with Christ (cf. vi. 2-4). " As the case stands, the law which bound us was invalidated by our dying to that wherein we were held fast, so that we are slaves in a new spiritual order and not in the old order of a written code " (ver. 6).

By dying with Christ to sin the believer dies to the Law : so runs the Apostle's argument ; and it provoked an indignant Jewish protest : " Is the Law sin ? " See how he answers. Instead of debating the question he takes a more effective way, and in a passage which, brief as it is, ranks with Bunyan's spiritual autobiography in *Grace Abounding*, tells the story of his personal experience, recounting how he had vainly sought after peace with God by the works of the Law and at length had found it by faith in Christ.

1. His Awakening (vers. 7-12). Here he draws aside the veil and, with shamefast reticence, discloses a momentous crisis in his unrecorded youth. What was it that awakened him to his need of justification and reconciliation with God ? It was a moral lapse, natural in one so sensitive, so emotional, who all his days, on his own confession (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 27), was vexed by unruly passions. Like the psalmist (Ps. xxv. 7) he was haunted by a humbling memory of " the sins of his youth and his transgressions " ; and it was a deed of shame—slight, perhaps, yet heinous to a quick conscience and a heart set on doing the will of God—that first revealed to him " the plague

of his heart " and drove him on his long and eager quest after righteousness by the only way he knew—the Pharisaic way of obedience to the Law and performance of the works which it prescribed.

By that way he found no peace. When he had kept all the commandments, like the young ruler in the Gospel-story (Mt. xix. 20) he realised that something was still lacking. And so he attained a momentous discovery. He perceived what is the true office of the Law—not to save sinners but to convince them of their need of salvation. See how he expresses it (vers. 12, 13): " The Law is holy, and the commandment holy and righteous and good. Did what is good, then, prove death to me? Away with the idea! No, but sin did, that it might be shown as sin, by working out death for me through what is good, that sin might come out in its transcendent sinfulness through the commandment."

2. His Conflict (vers. 14-23). What came of his long struggle to attain righteousness? Many another earnest soul had aspired upward only to confess defeat and bewail the impotence of human endeavour, like that Persian at the banquet at Thebes of whom Herodotus tells: " This is the cruellest of the pangs men feel—to have a mind to many things and mastery of none," a plaint thus rendered by the Theban poet in golden verse: " They say that this is the sorest pain—to recognise noble things and perforce turn the foot aside." But for young Saul of Tarsus the moral conflict had a larger issue. It revealed to him how it came to pass that, strive as he might, his efforts were continually baffled. The reason was that his nature was divided against itself.

See how he expresses it: " The Law is spiritual, but I am " —what? " Carnal " our Version has it missing the drift of the argument. The word in the original signifies properly " made of flesh " or—to coin a word on the analogy of " wooden," " silken," " reeden," " leathern," and the like—" fleshen." " The Law," says the Apostle, is spiritual, but I am fleshen—a creature of flesh." Hence the moral conflict. Had he been " carnal " or " fleshly," there would have been none, since he would then have been " carnally minded," delighting

in the lusts of the flesh ; and the trouble was that he was a spiritual being, "delighted with the Law of God so far as his inmost self was concerned," but encompassed with flesh, and its lusts strove against his spiritual aspirations. "I am a creature of flesh, sold into sin's thralldom."

Here amid his weakness and defeat he found reassurance and a hope of ultimate deliverance, not by his own effort but by heavenly intervention.

I strive like to the vessel in the tide-way,
Which, lacking favouring breeze, hath not the power
To stem the powerful current. Even so,
Resolving daily to forsake my vices,
Habits, strong circumstance, renew'd temptation,
Sweep me to sea again. O heavenly breath,
Fill thou my sails, and aid the feeble vessel,
Which ne'er can reach the blessed port without thee !

3. His Deliverance (vers. 24, 25a). There is a gruesome tale of ancient barbarity, commemorated by Vergil, of an Etruscan tyrant Mezentius, who would join dead bodies to living, putting them together hand to hand and mouth to mouth, and leave them in loathsome embrace to a lingering death. It is the sort of horror that grips the imagination, and it appealed to the Apostle as an image of his own condition—a spiritual being bound to a body of sinful flesh. "Wretched man that I am !" was his lament ; "who will rescue me from this body of death ?" And he found a Deliverer. "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord !"

A DEVOTIONAL RETROSPECT (vii. 25b–viii)

(I) THE NEXUS OF SALVATION

vii. 25b–viii. 13

25b *So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God ; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

2 *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

3 *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and *for sin, condemned sin in the flesh :*

4 *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

5 *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*

6 *For †to be carnally minded is death ; but ‡to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

7 *Because §the carnal mind is enmity against God : for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

8 *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

9 *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

10 *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin ; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

* Or, by a sacrifice for sin.

† Gr. the minding of the spirit.

‡ Gr. the minding of the flesh.

§ Gr. the minding of the flesh.

11 *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies* by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

12 *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.*

13 *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die : but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

THAT cry of thanksgiving (ver. 25a) is the proper close of the chapter ; and now the Apostle proceeds to unfold its significance. " So, then," he says, restating the situation—the tragic antinomy, " I my own self with the reason am a slave to the law of God but with the flesh to the law of sin. So, as the case stands," he continues, indicating how he had been rescued by heavenly intervention from the desperate impasse, " there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (here " who walk . . . spirit " is lacking in the authentic text). For the law of the Spirit of life freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death."

Thus affirming his deliverance, he goes on to show how it was achieved. His experience, as here exhibited, was a chain of grace—a four-linked chain ; and the successive links are concisely defined by four phrases which constantly occur and recur in this and his other epistles : (1) " Christ for us "—in theological parlance, Substitution ; (2) " We in Christ "—Justification ; (3) " Christ in us "—Sanctification ; (4) " We for Christ "—Consecration. Observe the unfolding of this blessed nexus.

(1) " Christ for us " (vers. 3, 4). See how the situation is presented. The Law, " holy and righteous and good," if not our enemy. It is our friend, showing us God's requirement, and if we kept it, then it would bring us to life ; but when we disobey it, then it condemns and cannot save us (cf. vii. 10), and there is no help for us apart from the intervention of heavenly grace. " Proud man," says St. Augustine, " had perished everlastingly, unless a lowly God had found him." And so it is written : " What the Law could not do, inasmuch as it was

* Or, *because of his Spirit.*

weak through the flesh, God by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and to deal with sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the Law's righteous requirement might be fulfilled in us, who follow not the ways of the flesh but those of the spirit."

(2) "We in Christ" (vers. 5-8). His work for us, His vicarious sacrifice for the sin of the world, is thus far a thing outside of us; and it avails us nothing until we enter into it. Only when we are "in Christ," are we justified. And this truth the Apostle expresses by that distinction of his between "flesh" and "spirit," signifying the two sides of our fallen nature—the lower where sin reigns, and the higher where the Holy Spirit operates. There are, as it were, two storeys in "our earthly house of this tabernacle"—an under storey, dark and polluted and decaying; and an upper storey, with windows open to the light and the sweet, healthful air of heaven. And the decisive question is which of these we choose to inhabit. Are we "minding the things of the spirit" or "the things of the flesh"? So our Version has it, but it is properly a political phrase that the Apostle here employs. To mind the things of a party meant to side with that party, to espouse its cause. And this is the alternative inevitably presented to us: "Those who take the ways of the flesh espouse the cause of the flesh; while those who take the spirit's ways espouse the spirit's cause." And "the espousal of the cause of the flesh is death; while the espousal of the spirit's cause is life and peace."

(3) "Christ in us" (vers. 9-11). Justification is not enough: it must be followed by Sanctification. And Sanctification comes by our eschewing the low domain of the flesh and stedfastly inhabiting the domain of the spirit and breathing there the grace of the Holy Spirit. If we be "in the spirit," then "the Spirit of God dwelleth in us"; or, as the Apostle, ever conscious of the unity of the Blessed Godhead, puts it in the same breath, if we be "in Christ," then "Christ is in us." And what ensues? Even as a neglected habitation falls to ruin, so, if we forsake the domain of the flesh, then by mere disuse its passions wither and die. This is the way of sanctification. "If Christ be in you, then while the body is dead

by reason of sin, the spirit is life by reason of righteousness." And it is by thus dying unto sin that the body lives unto God and, purged of fleshly corruption, shares the glory of our Lord's Resurrection.

(4) The first link in the chain of grace was "Christ for us," and the last is "We for Christ" (vers. 12, 13)—Consecration. "So, then," says the Apostle, "we are debtors, not to the flesh, that we should live according to the flesh." And it is a double debt. First, a debt of honour toward Christ (cf. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15).

Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my Soul, my Life, my All.

And, like every debt of honour, it is no less a duty which we owe to ourselves. "For, if ye are living according to the flesh, ye shall soon die." It can be no otherwise, since the things of the flesh are evanescent, and if we set our hearts on these, what is left us when they pass away? "It is the difference betwixt Lust and Love," says William Penn, "that this is fixt, that volatile. Love grows, Lust wastes by Enjoyment" (cf. 1 Jo. ii. 16, 17).

(2) A THREEFOLD INCENTIVE

viii. 14-27

14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

15 *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

16 *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God :*

17 *And if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

18 *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

19 *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

20 *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,*

21 *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

22 *For we know that *the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

23 *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

24 *For we are saved by hope : but hope that is seen is not hope : for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for ?*

25 *But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

* Or, every creature.

26 *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

27 *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, *because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

THE Apostle has been calling us to a stern conflict, and now he nerves us to it by displaying its splendid issues. I. Reinstatement in our birthright as sons of God (vers. 14-17). His thought here is arrestingly expressed by that word "adoption." Though peculiar to himself among the sacred writers (cf. vers. 15, 23, ix. 4 ; Gal. iv. 5 ; Eph. i. 5), it was familiar to his readers, bearing in common use precisely the same meaning as it bears among ourselves ; but it should be observed that on his lips, as he employed it in the service of Christian theology, it carried an uncommon significance. Of old even as now it denoted the reception of an alien into a family and his investment with the privileges of sonship. He possessed those privileges ; but he remained an alien, and a son he could never be. For a son is born, not made, and sonship is alike incommunicable and indefeasible. A son may be disinherited, but he cannot be defiliated. Once a son, always a son : "relation stands."

And so in the spiritual domain. The children of men, made in God's image, are all, in their proper nature, children of God (see exposition of Lk. iii. 38) ; and the distinction, the momentous distinction, is that, while all have sinned and wandered away from God, some have returned home and others are still in the far country. A believer is a son who was lost and is found, and an unbeliever a son still lost but still dear to the Father and tenderly desired.

Hence appears the peculiar significance of the word "adoption" as the Apostle employs it. In the Greek it means literally "setting in the place of a son," and in his theological parlance it denotes the reinstatement of God's penitent children in their forfeited birthright. See how he has thus defined it in his

* Or, *that*.

earlier epistle to the Galatians (iv. 4-6) : " God sent forth His Son, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might (not merely " receive " but) receive back the adoption—our filial status. And *because ye are sons*, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, *Abba, Father.*"

And what of that phrase " *Abba, Father* " ? *Abba* is the Aramaic of " Father." The kindly vernacular rose instinctively to Jewish lips in moods of tenderness (see exposition of Mk. v. 41) ; and, remembering how the Master had prayed in His agony (Mk. xiv. 36), the believers would pray in like manner " Our Father, O our Father ! " See how moving a part the sacred phrase plays here in the Apostle's argument. It was told a generation ago by a saint of the Scottish Church, whose memory is still fragrant in the land and far beyond, that once he visited a home stricken with a heavy and abiding sorrow. The only child was an imbecile. He found the mother in sore distress and inquired the reason. " It's my boy," she answered, and explained that it was his thirteenth birthday—the age when a Jewish boy of old was reckoned " a son of the commandment " and began attending the Feast of the Passover. But her child was still lying, mere animated clay, irresponsible to all the love continually lavished upon him. " Ah ! " she mourned, " I would be content if he would just look up in my face and say ' Mother ! ' "

Even such is God's desire—that His lost children, awaking to their need, should cry " *Abba, Father !* " And when a sinner thus responds to the love which has pursued him all his days, then he is a lost son no longer. He has turned homeward and is reinstated in his birthright. " How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a goodly heritage ? Thou shalt call Me ' My Father,' and shalt not turn away from Me " (Jer. iii. 19).

2. The Glory soon to be revealed (vers. 18-25). It is one thing to be reinstated in our birthright and another to be put in possession thereof. It is ours the moment our hearts turn to God and cry " *Abba, Father !* " but meanwhile we are dwelling here in a world stricken with the curse of sin and sharing its sorrow and suffering, even as Christ did in the days of His flesh, yet ever cheered with a radiant hope, the prospect that we too

like Him shall be "delivered from the bondage of corruption" and enter upon our heritage, since, as the Apostle has just said (ver. 17), "if we are children, we are also heirs—God's heirs, and Christ's fellow-heirs, if so be that we are His fellows in suffering, that we may be made also His fellows in glory."

A future heritage, ours as yet only in prospect and not in realisation! But the prospect suffices to transfigure the bleak present. So the Apostle testifies out of his own experience. And his is a weighty testimony, since he was no facile optimist but one who had drunk deep of the cup of sorrow and suffering, and contemplated the tragedy of life, and despite thereof had attained

that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world
Is lightened.

And here he delivers his verdict in a noble passage, much marred in our Version: "I reckon that the sufferings of the present crisis are not worth mentioning in view of the glory which will soon be revealed as our portion. For the creation, eagerly intent, is awaiting the revelation of the sons of God. The creation was subjected to futility—not of its own choice but by reason of him who subjected it—with an underlying hope, forasmuch as the creation itself also will be liberated from enslavement to corruption into the liberty of the glory of God's children." It was Adam, the first head of our race, who "subjected the creation to futility," since his sin cursed all his fellow-creatures, not alone his posterity but the innocent beasts and even inanimate nature (cf. Gen. iii. 17). The tragedy is before our eyes. "For we know that all the creation hath been groaning and travailing with mankind until this day." But, says the Apostle, beneath the anguish there has always lain a hope. Hard after the Fall came the promise of deliverance (cf. Gen. iii. 15), a hope dim and faint at its dawning yet ever fuller and clearer from age to age until the Saviour came.

Now that He has come, the curse still remains; and not alone the unbelieving world but "ourselves also, though we

have the first-fruits of the Spirit—we ourselves also are inly groaning while we await our investment with our birthright—the redemption of our body.” And what does this mean? Not that the promise has failed, but that, even as the Saviour in the days of His flesh shared the world’s woe, so must we, “His fellows in suffering, that we may be made also His fellows in glory.” And even as He “for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame,” so are we cheered by the hope of “the glory that will soon be revealed as our portion.” “For,” says the Apostle, “it is by the hope that we were saved”; and it will still suffice us until we attain its glorious realisation.

3. The Spirit’s Help (vers. 26, 27). Where faith is weak, hope is dim; and it is hard for faith to live in a dark world where we must grope our way, often so bewildered that “what to pray for as we should we do not know,” and our prayers are but blind cries—“inarticulate groanings.” Here we have an unfailing resource: “The Spirit helpeth our (not “infirmities” but) infirmity.” Mark that word “helpeth.” In the original it is a long compound, signifying literally “to lay hold of—along with—opposite.” The idea is that you are striving to lift a burden too heavy for you, and a friend comes to your aid. He grasps it, and then both together—you on this side and he on that—you lift it easily. It is very significant that the word occurs in the New Testament only once again—in St. Luke’s story of the supper in Martha’s house (x. 38–42), where it is told how the good housewife, aggrieved that her sister had left her alone to serve, appealed to the Master: “bid her therefore that she help me—that she lend me a helping hand.” It was a homely word, and the Apostle employs it here of the Holy Spirit’s ministration to burdened and bewildered souls: “Likewise also the Spirit lendeth us a helping hand.”

God does not take our burdens and carry them for us. He “lendeth us a helping hand.” So teaches the Latin proverb that “Fortune helps brave men”; and so too Carlyle’s anecdote, how once Sir David Ramsay and Lord Rea were discussing a difficult reform. “Well,” said his lordship, quoting Shakespeare, “‘God mend all!’” “Nay, by God, Donald,” was the

pithy retort, "we must help Him to mend it." We may be feeble and bewildered, our prayers no more than "inarticulate groanings"; but, if there be courage in our hearts, the Spirit, interceding for us, interprets them and, as He presents them at the Throne of Grace, they are "a mighty cry in God's ear."

(3) A SONG OF TRIUMPH

viii. 28-39

28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

30 *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called : and whom he called, them he also justified : and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

31 *What shall we then say to these things ? If God be for us, who can be against us ?*

32 *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?*

33 *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth.*

34 *Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ?*

36 *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

37 *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

38 *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*

39 *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

WHAT is it that sets the Apostle's heart a-singing? It is the thought of the eternal security of the believer. And his assurance thereof is God's sovereign purpose of goodness and mercy. See how he begins (ver. 28). Render the verse thus: "And we know that with those who love God He co-operateth in everything for good—with those who are called in accordance with His purpose." Thus he defines "those who love God." They are, in the first instance, "called"; but so far the definition is incomplete. For all are "called," but not all respond; and where there is no response, the call is unavailing (cf. Pr. i. 24). And so it is written, not merely "those who are called," but "those who are called in accordance with His purpose"—those who respond to His call and consent to His purpose and let it have its blessed way. Such are God's elect; for, said Henry Ward Beecher, "the elect are whosoever will, and the non-elect whosoever won't."

And see what the purpose of God meant for the Apostle, and how he dwells upon it *con amore*. From all eternity God has thought of us and planned for us; and when at length He brought us into being, He called us to work out His high design; and when we failed, His grace still pursued us, nor will it let us go until it has "fulfilled all the good pleasure of His goodness." Foreknown, foreordained, called, justified, glorified: these are the links in the chain of God's eternal purpose—"the sacred chain that binds the earth to heaven above." And what a thought it is, ennobling our little lives which are else so poor and trivial and mean! "I would rather," says George MacDonald, "be what God chose to make me, than the most glorious creature that I could think of. For to have been thought about—born in God's thoughts—and then made by God, is the dearest, grandest, most precious thing in all thinking."

In the grasp of God's eternal purpose we are eternally secure. "If," cries the Apostle, "God is for us, who is against us?" or, as Barbour has it in *The Bruce* "quhar God helpys, quhat may withstand?" And what was his assurance that God is indeed for us? It was the Cross of Christ. A love which faced that infinite Sacrifice, is inexhaustible.

Thou, who hast trod the thorny road,
 Wilt share each small distress ;
 The love which bore the greater load
 Will not refuse the less.

Resting on this argument, he proclaims his triumphant confidence. "I am persuaded," he says, or more precisely "I have been persuaded." Mark the phrase. It was frequently on his lips, and it expressed always not merely a secure faith but one which he had reached through storm and strife, had lived into and been assured of by blessed experience (cf. 2 Tim. i. 12). And in this high faith he is done with doubt and fear. See what he does. He reviews the terrors which afflict our souls, marshals them in grim procession, and sets them all at defiance. "*Neither death nor life.*" Observe the order. "Is not the fear of death," asked Boswell of Dr. Johnson, "natural to man?" "So much so, Sir," was the answer, "that the whole of life is but keeping away the thoughts of it." Yet the Apostle puts death first and passes thence to life as a greater terror. And is not this a just estimate? For think what awful possibilities life contains—bereavement, the blasting of hope, the wreckage of fortune, the frustration of endeavour, sickness, disease, the loss of reason, and—worst of all—moral disaster and irretrievable disgrace. Wisely wrote Dr. George Matheson :

Many there be that seek Thy face
 To meet the hour of parting breath ;
 But 'tis for life I need Thy grace :
 Life is more solemn still than death.

In view of all the perils and snares besetting life's pathway what is it but a triumph, impossible without prevenient grace, when a traveller reaches the end unscathed and undishonoured? "*Nor angels nor principalities nor powers*"—the encompassing forces which, call them what we may, play upon our lives, mysterious, incalculable. "*Nor things present nor things to come*"—the terrors which confront us and those which may await us. "*Nor height nor depth*"—the last convulsion of the universe, the return of Chaos and ancient Night. Surely the catalogue is now complete. So far indeed as his experience

reached, the Apostle could conceive no further terror, but he knew not what might yet emerge beyond his present imagination, what undreamed of ordeals in worlds unrealised. And so he adds "*nor any different creation.*" To every terror, known or unknown, the worst he had experienced, the worst he could imagine, and worse still if worse were possible, he bids defiance, since evermore he would be attended by that unutterable, unfathomable, inexhaustible Love—"the Love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

3. THE ELECTION OF ISRAEL (ix-xi)

(I) THE TRAGEDY OF HER REJECTION

ix

1 *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,*

2 *That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.*

3 *For I could wish that myself were *accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh :*

4 *Who are Israelites ; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the †covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ;*

5 *Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*

6 *Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel :*

7 *Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children : but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.*

8 *That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God : but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*

9 *For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.*

10 *And not only this ; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac ;*

11 *(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth ;)*

12 *It was said unto her, The ‡elder shall serve the §younger.*

* Or, separated.

† Or, testaments.

‡ Or, greater.

§ Or, lesser.

13 *As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*

14 *What shall we say then ? Is there unrighteousness with God ? God forbid.*

15 *For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

16 *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*

17 *For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*

18 *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

19 *Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault ? For who hath resisted his will ?*

20 *Nay but, O man, who art thou that *repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ?*

21 *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour ?*

22 *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath †fitted to destruction :*

23 *And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,*

24 *Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles ?*

25 *As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people ; and her beloved, which was not beloved.*

26 *And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people ; there shall they be called the children of the living God.*

27 *Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved :*

* Or, answerest again, or, disputest with God ?

† Or, made up.

28 *For he will finish *the work, and cut it short in righteousness : because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.*

29 *And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.*

30 *What shall we say then ? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.*

31 *But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.*

32 *Wherefore ? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone ;*

33 *As it is written, Behold I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence : and whosoever believeth on him shall not be †ashamed.*

THE Apostle had not merely proclaimed the rejection of unbelieving Israel but publicly acted upon it. Remember his procedure in the course of his missions (see exposition of i. 16). In every town which he visited, he sought the synagogue and began his ministry there, making his first appeal to the Jews ; and when they rejected it, he “ turned to the Gentiles.” To his Jewish readers it was very grievous that they, the children of Abraham, should be rejected of God and their high privileges bestowed upon the despised Gentiles. Indeed it was incredible, since, as they argued (see exposition of Mt. iii. 9, Jo. viii. 33), forasmuch as God had made a covenant with their father Abraham and his seed after him, He was bound to them for ever. And it was no less distressful to the Apostle himself, insomuch that he was well-nigh disposed to wish himself mistaken. “ I caught myself praying,” he confesses (ver. 3), “ that I should be myself an accursed outcast from the Christ (Messiah) for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Himself an Israelite, he loved his people, and even while he proclaimed it, their humiliation was “ a ceaseless pain

* Or, the account.

† Or, confounded.

to his heart"—a continual ache. And it touched his pride. For very precious to him were the sacred traditions of his nation, and very grievous the tragic doom of a people who had been so honoured of God and whose crowning honour was that "of them had sprung the Christ according to the flesh—He who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

So the great Fathers and the early Versions construed the sentence, rightly recognising it as an express affirmation of our Lord's true deity; and its subsequent handling amid the stress of theological controversy constitutes a curious chapter in the history of interpretation. First came the Sabellian version of the doctrine of the Trinity as signifying not a threefold distinction of persons in the Godhead but a threefold manifestation of one Divine Person, the Father being the One God as Creator, the Son the same One God as Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit the same One God as Sanctifier. In support hereof appeal was made to the Apostle's identification of Christ with "God blessed for ever"; and the apologists countered the argument by variously reconstructing the passage. (1) A period was put after "flesh"; and what follows was rendered either "He who is over all, even God, be (or "is") blessed for ever" or "He who is over all is God blessed for ever." (2) The period was put after "all," and so the verse runs: "the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all (cf. x. 12). God be" (or "is") "blessed for ever." Thinking thus to checkmate one heresy, they encouraged another. For the Arians, the forerunners of our Unitarians, welcomed their manipulation of the text as eliminating the Apostle's affirmation of our Lord's deity. It is always perilous to twist Scripture to our own ends.

And now, addressing himself to the poignant question of Israel's rejection, the Apostle begins by refuting the vain confidence of the Jews, their argument that because they were God's elect people, they were assured of His perpetual favour.

1. The limitation of election (vers. 6-13). Israel was indeed God's chosen people, but according to Scripture there was an election within the election. "Not all who are of Israel's race are Israel; nor because they are Abraham's seed are they all his children." Isaac was Abraham's true-born son,

and he inherited the promise ; but Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau, both alike true-born, and though Esau was the elder, he was disinherited and Jacob preferred, and that " ere they were born or had done aught good or ill, that God's elective purpose might abide on the score not of works but of His call." And lest his readers should miss the import of that providential dispensation, the Apostle quotes the grim sentence of their ancient prophet (Mal. i. 2, 3) : " Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

Deep called to deep ; I trembling stood ;
 I murmured at eternal fate ;
 I said, " Can God, for ever good,
 His Jacob love, His Esau hate ? "

Our hearts cry out against it, and the Apostle felt the anguish of it as keenly as any ; yet he does not stay to justify the pitiless decree. For his immediate purpose is to beat down the arrogance of his Jewish readers and dispel their vain confidence ; and he presents the scriptural testimony in its naked severity. With this before them could they dispute the possibility of the rejection of faithless Israel ?

2. The sovereignty of God (vers. 14-18). Here the Apostle deals with the reason whereon the Jews rested their argument that, since they were God's elect people, they were assured of His favour. It was that He was bound by His promise, and should He break it, there would be " unrighteousness with Him." The fallacy lay in their forgetfulness that His promise was conditioned by their faithfulness ; but here again, for the argument's sake, the Apostle prefers to answer them out of their own mouths, and he confronts them with their hard doctrine of the Divine Sovereignty. Their idea was that, since all are sinners, all stand condemned, and salvation is of God's sovereign will. He owes men nothing. " It is mercy wherever He hath mercy and compassion wherever He hath compassion " ; and there is no unrighteousness in His withholding mercy and leaving sinners to their merited doom. Since God is sovereign, He deals with men for His own glory, " that He may demonstrate in them His power, and that His name may be proclaimed

abroad in all the earth " (Ex. ix. 16). Therefore it was, they argued, that " He hardened Pharaoh's heart," oblivious how it is written first that " Pharaoh hardened his heart " and then that by inevitable consequence " his heart was hardened "; and God's hardening of his heart was the righteous doom of his own wilful obduracy.

3. God's irresponsibility (vers. 19-29). There remained yet another Jewish objection. If God be sovereign, having mercy on whom He will and hardening whom He will, " why doth He still find fault ? " So the Jews were wont to argue. And what was the Jewish answer ? It is told, for example, how Rabbi Eliezer once met a stranger who was exceedingly dirty. He saluted the Rabbi, and the latter, instead of returning his salutation, upbraided him for his condition, asking if all his townsfolk were like him. " I know not," was the answer ; " but go and tell my Maker how dirty is the vessel which He hath made." Why should he be blamed when he knew no better ? As he was, so God had made him ; for it is written (cf. Jer. xviii. 6) that men are as clay in the hands of the potter, and it lies not with the clay to censure the potter's work or challenge his right to mould it as he will. " Nay rather, O man, who art thou that answerest God back ? "

Thus with an argument of their own the Apostle silences his Jewish adversaries ; but he does not leave the question there. He proceeds to throw out an uplifting suggestion which he presently develops as the consummation of his discussion of this poignant theme. God, he has insisted in terms of Jewish theology, is sovereign, and His supreme end is the demonstration of His own glory, nor does it lie with us to challenge His dispensations ; but, he now adds, is this the last word ? May it not be that He is all the while working out a gracious purpose ? " Suppose," he says (vers. 22-24), " that, while it was God's will to demonstrate His wrath and publish His power, He bore in much long-suffering with ' vessels of wrath ' fitted ' for destruction,' that also "—here is the Apostle's suggestion of God's ultimate end—" He might publish the riches of His glory toward vessels of mercy which He prepared beforehand for glory—even us whom He also called, not only from among

Jews but from among Gentiles also? ” What if that were the final issue?—the creation of a better Israel, a new, a larger, a nobler people of God, an incorporation of the believing Gentiles, according to Hosea’s vision (i. 9, 10, ii. 23), with the believing Jews, a mere “remnant” indeed, in prophetic phrase (cf. Is. i. 9, x. 22, 23), of ancient Israel yet always the heart of the nation, the true seed of Abraham and heirs of the promise.

(2) HER INEXCUSABILITY

X

1 *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

2 *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

3 *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

4 *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

5 *For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.*

6 *But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven ? (that is, to bring Christ down from above :))*

7 *Or, Who shall descend into the deep ? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)*

8 *But what saith it ? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart : that is, the word of faith, which we preach ;*

9 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

10 *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

11 *For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

12 *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek : for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

13 *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

14 *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed ? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a preacher ?*

15 *And how shall they preach, except they be sent ? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things !*

16 *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed *our †report ?*

17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

18 *But I say, Have they not heard ? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.*

19 *But I say, Did not Israel know ? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.*

20 *But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not ; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.*

21 *But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

BY an appeal to their own doctrines the Apostle has demonstrated the sad fact of his people's rejection ; and now, continuing his argument, he not merely reaffirms his sorrow thereat but intimates his confidence, which he presently vindicates (chap. xi), in their ultimate restoration. " My heart's consent and my prayer to God for them are that they may be saved." Not, observe, " for Israel " but, according to the authentic text, " for them "—the unbelieving Jews who, as he has shown (cf. ix. 7), by their unbelief had forfeited their title to rank as Israelites. The immediate ground of his confidence was their " zeal for God." It was indeed " an uninstructed zeal." " Ignoring God's righteousness and seeking to set up one of their own, they were not subjected to the righteousness of God." But an uninstructed zeal is better

* Gr. *the hearing of us.*

† Or, *preaching.*

than indifference, and surely their very failure would open their eyes and turn their hearts to the truth which they had ignored.

And what was the truth which they had ignored? It was the message of the Gospel—that righteousness is by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law (cf. i. 16, 17). “For,” says the Apostle, “Christ is the end of the Law.” See what this means. “End” is commonly understood in the sense of “termination”; and so the phrase would mean that Christ put an end to the Law, so that we are now done with it (cf. Mt. xi. 13; Lk. xvi. 16). But He did not “put an end” to the Law: He “fulfilled” it (cf. Mt. v. 17), and it still abides with a larger and richer significance. And so the Christian Fathers generally took “end” in the sense of “fulfilment” (cf. Lk. xxii. 37); but St. Chrysostom, that master of interpretation, more fitly understood it as “the end sought,” “the aim” (cf. 1. Tim. i, 5). And so the Apostle means that even as the aim of the physician’s art is healing, so the Law’s aim was the leading of sinners to Christ. “The Law’s goal is Christ, that righteousness may accrue to every one that hath faith.” This is the message which they had ignored; and he proceeds to demonstrate their inexcusability.

(1) The Gospel was no remote mystery (vers. 5–10). Here, reasoning with Jews, he tellingly appeals to that familiar passage (Dt. xxx. 11–14) where Moses in his farewell to the Israelites admonishes them of the responsibility which rested upon them now that the Lord their God had vouchsafed them a Law for their guidance and instruction. “For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? But the word is very nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.” Playfully imitating the allegorical method of the Rabbinical interpreters, the Apostle applies the passage to the revelation vouchsafed to his Jewish readers in Christ. It was no remote mystery which they must search out,

like an astronomer scanning the high heaven with his telescope, like an explorer crossing the wide ocean or digging deep in quest of treasure. It had come very near them when

the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds
More strong than all poetic thought ;

and still nearer was it now that He was risen from the dead, an Eternal Presence.

(2) Even in their Law the Gospel was foreshadowed (vers. 11-13). For the Gospel required faith ; and was it not written (Is. xxviii. 16) that " no one who resteth his faith on Him shall be put to shame " ? Again, it extended grace to the Gentiles, making " no distinction between Jew and Greek " ; and was it not written (Joel ii. 32) that " whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved " ? There, proclaimed of old, was the very message whereat they stumbled.

(3) Nor could they plead that the Gospel had never been presented to them (vers. 14, 15). It had been proclaimed to them and urged upon them by the Lord's own messengers, commissioned on that high errand. And yet they had ignored it, oblivious of the prophetic premonition (Is. lii. 7) : " How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of good things ! "

(4) Not only had the Gospel been thus distinctly foreshadowed, but by their Law and their Prophets alike the Israelites of old had been admonished of the guilt of unbelief and the doom which it would entail—the very doom which had now befallen the unbelieving Jews in their rejection and the passing of their privileges to the despised Gentiles (cf. Is. liii. 1 ; Dt. xxxii. 21 ; Is. lxv. 1, 2). Yet they had been deaf to those solemn warnings ; and that was the climax of their inexcusability (vers. 16-21).

(3) ASSURANCE OF HER RESTORATION

xi

1 *I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.*

2 *God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith *of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,*

3 *Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.*

4 *But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.*

5 *Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

6 *And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.*

7 *What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were †blinded*

8 *(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of ‡slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.*

9 *And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them:*

10 *Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.*

11 *I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.*

* Gr. *in Elias?*

† Or, *hardened.*

‡ Or, *remorse.*

12 Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the *diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles ; how much more their fulness ?

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office :

14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

15 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead ?

16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy : and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in †among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree ;

18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

20 Well ; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear :

21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God : on them which fell, severity ; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness : otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in : for God is able to graff them in again.

24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree : how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree ?

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits ; that ‡blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

* Or, decay, or, loss.

† Or, for them.

‡ Or, hardness.

26 *And so all Israel shall be saved : as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob :*

27 *For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

28 *As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes : but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.*

29 *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*

30 *For as ye in times past have not *believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief :*

31 *Even so have these also now not †believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.*

32 *For God hath ‡concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.*

33 *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !*

34 *For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been his counsellor ?*

35 *Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again ?*

36 *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

HERE the Apostle reaches the goal of his long argument, the happy conclusion which has been before his mind all along, even when he was writing hard things of his people. Israel's rejection was not final. "Hath God cast off His people (cf. Ps. xciv. 14) ? Away with the idea !" he cries, dismissing it at the outset as unthinkable. For he was himself an Israelite of the purest and proudest descent, and had Israel been cast off, he must have shared her doom ; and since he had received mercy, there was mercy for others. And furthermore it was incredible that all the grace which had been lavished on Israel should go for naught.

* Or, *obeyed*.

† Or, *obeyed*.

‡ Or, *shut them all up together*.

To give a thing and take again
 Is counted meanness among men ;
 To take away what once is given
 Cannot then be the way of heaven.

No, "God hath not cast off His people whom He foreknew (cf. viii. 29)." And this impassioned protestation he vindicates by a powerful argument.

1. It was not all Israel that was rejected but only unbelieving Israel (vers. 2b-10). Here he takes up that prophetic idea which he has already incidentally introduced (cf. ix. 27)—the faithful "remnant"; and he illustrates it by a memorable passage (1 Ki. xix. 9-18)—"what the Scripture saith (not "of Elias" but) in the story of Elijah." In those days of apostasy it seemed to the prophet that he alone remained faithful, till it was shown him that there were still seven thousand men in Israel "who had not bowed a knee to Baal." A small remnant indeed, but in it the true Israel survived. And history was now repeating itself. "Even so at the present crisis also there hath turned out to be a remnant according to the election of grace"—the nucleus of a better Israel.

2. Even for the unbelieving majority there still was hope (vers. 11-24). For the present indeed they were, as the Apostle has recognised (cf. vers. 7, 8),—not "blinded" but—"hardened," more precisely "grown callous"; in prophetic phrase (Is. xxix. 19), "God had given them a spirit of stupefaction"—the "deep sleep" of one drugged with a narcotic. But they would awake, startled as by a rude shock. For the spectacle of the Gentiles enjoying their forfeited privileges would, in the language of Scripture (cf. Dt. xxxii. 21), "move them to jealousy"; and then their desolate hearts would turn to the Saviour whom they had rejected.

Hence emerged a novel situation, fraught with sacred opportunity and grave responsibility for the believing Gentiles. Now that Israel had been rejected and her ancient heritage had passed to them, it lay with them to employ it faithfully, and so improve their opportunity as to show the unbelieving Jews what they had lost. That was his own steadfast ambition. He was "an Apostle to Gentiles"; and, though apostasy in Jewish

eyes, he recognised his mission as a truly patriotic service. "I glorify my ministry," he says, "in the hope of moving my countrymen to jealousy and saving some of them." Nor was it a forlorn hope. For, he argues, even in their unbelief the Jews were still dear to God, on the principle proclaimed of old by the ordinance of the "heave offering" (cf. Num. xv. 17-21). The requirement was that when an Israelite had gathered in his harvest, the first cake baked of the new flour should be an offering to the Lord; and this offering of "the first of the dough" consecrated all the rest. "If 'the first-fruits' be holy, so also is 'the dough'." That was a Jewish illustration, and to make the truth plain to his Gentile readers he employs another more easily intelligible to them: "If the root be holy, so also are the branches."

It is a gardener's metaphor—the grafting of an alien branch on the stem of a tree. See how the Apostle works it out. He likens the believing Gentiles to branches of a wild olive grafted on the root of a good olive and nourished by its sap. The occasion of their ingrafting was that "the native branches" had proved unfruitful. And so they had been broken off, and alien branches ingrafted in their stead. And here he finds an admonition. Even as the native branches were broken off, so would the ingrafted branches be, should they too prove unfruitful. And should the Jews repent of their unbelief, then might not they, "the native branches," be reingrafted?

It is indeed an effective metaphor, driving home the Apostle's argument to the minds of his readers; but it would have missed its aim had it been addressed not to dwellers in cities but to countryfolk familiar with the natural order and the ways of husbandmen. For, as one ancient interpreter observes, "it is not in accordance with the law of husbandry." "Husbandmen," explains another, "are wont to graft a good olive on a wild olive and not a wild olive on a good olive." "For," says St. Jerome, "the manner is rather for the branch to assimilate the strength of the root than for the root to change the branch into its own quality." When the branches are barren, the fault is in the root, and the remedy is to graft them on a sound root which, whatever its nature, will nourish them with abundance

of rich sap. This is the *raison d'être* of grafting ; and the ingrafted branches retain their proper nature. Wild olive branches grafted on the root of a good olive would still bear wild olives. And branches once broken off can never be reingrafted. As our Lord says (Jo. xv. 6), they are " cast forth and withered."

It is easy for a writer, engrossed in the working out of his argument, to err thus in details, like Scott when in *The Antiquary* (chap. vii) he inadvertently makes the sun set in the East, " resting his huge disk upon the edge of the level ocean." And the risk is the greater when he ventures upon an illustration outwith his own experience. So was it here with the Apostle. All his days it was with cities that he had to do ; and it was from their institutions and manners that he borrowed his illustrations—their trades and industries (cf. Rom. ix. 21 ; 2 Cor. ii. 17 ; Eph. i. 14 ; 2 Cor. i. 22, v. 5), their military parade (cf. Eph. vi. 10–17 ; 2 Cor. ii. 14), their courts of law (cf. Rom. xiv. 10 ; 2 Cor. v. 10), their theatres (cf. 1 Cor. iv. 9, ix. 24–27), their buildings (cf. 1 Cor. iii. 10–15). Throughout the course of his extensive missions it was in cities that he preached. He hastened from city to city ; and it is remarkable that he never evinces the faintest interest in the scenery of the countries which he traversed or the ways of their population. And here, when he ventures on a metaphor of husbandry, he betrays by his handling of it how remote it was from his experience. Yet even so it served his purpose. It pointed his argument ; and that was his sole concern.

3. The manifestation of God's " mystery " (vers. 25–36). The Apostle's argument here turns on that word " mystery " ; and that his readers might not miss it he has defined its significance in the magnificent doxology which closes the epistle (xvi. 25, 26) and elsewhere as occasion arose (cf. Eph. i. 9, iii. 5, 9 ; Col. i. 26). In common parlance it meant simply " a secret," especially a religious secret, communicated under seal of silence to the initiated. And so in the Apostle's theological phraseology it signified a providential purpose long hidden from the children of men but now at length manifested in Christ. The supreme " mystery " hitherto was God's purpose of grace toward the Gentiles. For ages it had seemed as though He cared only for

Israel and had left the heathen in darkness ; but the Gospel had discovered how all the while they were precious to Him and in His dealings with Israel He was working out salvation for them also.

And now that the Jews had been rejected for their unbelief, it might seem as though the ancient tragedy were being re-enacted on their side. But, as he has already asseverated (cf. vers. 11-14), that was unthinkable to the Apostle. "For God never regretteth His gifts of grace and His calling," and they were still "beloved for their fathers' sake." Hence his heart leaps forward in a grand venture of faith, and beneath the present tragedy of Israel's rejection he descries a new "mystery" which in due time will be gloriously manifested.

My own hope is, a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched ;
That, after Last, returns the First,
Though a wide compass round be fetched ;
That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst.

Even as of old when it seemed as though the Lord were heedless of the Gentiles, He was all the while working out their salvation, so now was He "devising means that His banished be not outcast from Him" ; and at the long last the mystery would be manifested in the salvation of all mankind.

"Ah, the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge ! How unsearchable are His judgments and untrackable His ways !" *O altitudo !*—there in "St. Paul's sanctuary," as Sir Thomas Browne has it, our hearts evermore find security. Wherefore should we fret or be afraid, remembering how the Hidden Love which all down the ages has guided the children of men through strife and suffering to undreamed of issues, is still working out its blessed way ?

III. PRACTICAL

xii-xiv

I. CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

xii

1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

2 *And be not conformed to this world : but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

3 *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think ; but to think *soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

4 *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office :*

5 *So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

6 *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith :*

7 *Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering : or he that teacheth, on teaching ;*

8 *Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation : he that †giveth, let him do it ‡with simplicity ; he that ruleth, with diligence ; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*

9 *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil ; cleave to that which is good.*

10 *Be kindly affectioned one to another §with brotherly love ; in honour preferring one another ;*

11 *Not slothful in business ; fervent in spirit ; serving the Lord ;*

* Gr. to sobriety.

† Or, imparteth.

‡ Or, liberally.

§ Or, in the love of the brethren.

12 *Rejoicing in hope ; patient in tribulation ; continuing instant in prayer ;*

13 *Distributing to the necessity of saints ; given to hospitality.*

14 *Bless them which persecute you : bless, and curse not.*

15 *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*

16 *Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but *condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.*

17 *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*

18 *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

19 *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath : for it is written, Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

20 *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*

21 *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

THE Apostle has now completed his high argument—his exposition and defence of the Gospel of Justification by Faith ; and now ere closing the epistle he addresses to his readers a series of practical admonitions. For what avails it to know the truth unless we “ lay it up in our hearts and practise it in our lives ” ? He begins with a call to consecration (vers. 1, 2). It was inevitable that when the primitive believers, Jewish and Gentile alike, passed into the spiritual atmosphere of the Christian Faith, they should miss their accustomed ritual, so ornate and impressive. It appears, especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that they were derided by their former associates for the meagreness of their worship ; and one vexing taunt was that they had no altars and no sacrifices (cf. Heb. xiii. 10-16). And what was the answer of the sacred writers and the early apologists—Minucius Felix, Origen, Arnobius, and

* Or, be contented with mean things.

Lactantius? "We have indeed," said they, "no altars adorned with images and streaming with the blood of bulls and goats; but we have a nobler Altar—'a bloodless Altar' whereon we offer spiritual sacrifices, well-pleasing to God, sacrifices of praise and beneficence, through Him who by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." And so says the Apostle here: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well-pleasing to God—your spiritual ritual." It is not enough to have faith for the salvation of our souls. Our bodies also must be consecrated, and that in every domain of life.

Here the Apostle speaks of the domain of Christian fellowship with particular reference to an evil which was painfully apparent in the Christian communities. Then as always there was a diversity of "gifts" or, as the word properly signifies, "gifts of grace," begetting a spirit of jealous rivalry and discontent with the distribution of offices and honours (cf. 1 Cor. xii); and in reproof hereof the Apostle employs a homely parable which served of old for the assuagement of social discontent and which Shakespeare has commemorated in *Coriolanus*.

There was a time when all the body's members
 Rebelled against the belly; thus accused it:
 That only like a gulf it did remain
 I' the midst o' the body, idle and unactive,
 Still cupboarding the viand, never bearing
 Like labour with the rest; where the other instruments
 Did see and hear, devise, instruct, walk, feel,
 And, mutually participate, did minister
 Unto the appetite and affection common
 Of the whole body.

This metaphor the Apostle borrows, and applies to the Church, likening her to the body with its various members, some more honourable but all alike necessary. "For," as Burton has it in *The Anatomy*, "our body is like a clock; if one wheel be amiss, all the rest are disordered; the whole fabrick suffers." The lesson is that each should loyally accept the office whereto God has appointed him by fitting him for it, and in no wise "fret himself to death by trying to be what he is not, or to do what he cannot."

Thou cam'st not to thy place by accident :
 It is the very place God meant for thee ;
 And shouldst thou there small scope for action see,
 Do not for that give room to discontent.

The worst mischief of that evil spirit was that not merely did the less gifted envy their neighbours who by reason of their larger knowledge or finer eloquence enjoyed a wider influence and reputation, but too often in aspiring to rival these they were tempted to unreal pretensions. For example, preaching or, in New Testament phrase, " prophesying " is a testimony to one's personal experience of heavenly grace. The mature believer has a fuller experience than a novice ; and the novice should in no wise be discouraged in that he lacks as yet the experience of the saint, and still less should he imitate the saint's experience and affect a heavenly rapture which he does not actually feel. This is spiritual dishonesty, mischievous to preacher and hearers alike. And the Apostle's admonition is that, since our gifts differ according to the grace given us, we should " prophesy according to the proportion of " not merely " faith " but literally " the faith." And what does this mean? Hardly " the Faith " in the sense of the Church's Creed, since it was later that a creed was formulated under stress of theological controversy, but rather " our faith "—the faith which is in our hearts, born of our own blessed experience.

This homely parable of the body and its members the Apostle follows up with a long series of pithy and often humorous maxims. Most of them require no comment, but observe these :

1. " Let love be without dissimulation " (ver. 9) or rather, as the phrase is generally rendered (cf. 2 Cor. vi. 6 ; 1 Tim. i. 5 ; 2 Tim. i. 5 ; 1 Pet. i. 22), " unfeigned." Literally it is " without hypocrisy " (cf. Ja. iii. 17), signifying, according to the proper meaning of the word (see exposition of Mt. vi. 2), love that is not mere " play-acting "—that white lie of social intercourse which Anne Brontë satirises in *Agnes Grey* (chap. xv): " 'Stupid things ! ' muttered she. . . . She greeted them, however, with a cheerful smile, and protestations of pleasure at the happy meeting equal to their own."

2. For " mind not high things, but condescend to men of

low estate" (ver. 16) read "harbour no lofty ambitions, but embark on the stream of lowly duties"—the metaphor a boat "carried away" (cf. Gal. ii. 13; 2 Pet. iii. 17) on the tide.

3. "Never avenge yourselves, beloved, but give room to the Wrath" (vers. 19, 20). It is told how in the year 1650 Oliver Cromwell visited Glasgow and attended the ancient Cathedral of St. Mungo; and the preacher, a "high-flying" Presbyterian, indulged in a tirade against the Independent General. An officer of the latter rose and whispered him, presently subsiding in manifest discomfiture. It transpired that he had "proposed to pull forth the minister by the ears," and Cromwell had told him that "the preacher was one fool and he another." After the service Cromwell interviewed the preacher and dealt so effectively with his scruples that "the evening discourse, by the same man, was turned to the praise and glory of the victor of Naseby." An excellent example of the efficacy of magnanimity and good humour; and these are the graces which the Apostle here inculcates. He warns us against vindictiveness as always a stupid blunder. For (1) vengeance is God's business, and if we avenge ourselves, we usurp His office and take out of His hands a business which, left to Him, would be more effectively performed. "Never avenge yourselves, but give room to the Wrath"—God's wrath, the indignation which wrong ever kindles in His righteous breast (cf. i. 18). His vengeance is always far more terrible than any that we can inflict, and our wisdom lies in standing aside and letting Him work. (2) If we avenge ourselves, we put ourselves in the wrong and reduce ourselves to the level of the wrong-doer. Thus not only is the wrong doubled but we relinquish our advantage, since the forgoing of revenge is our surest and highest vindication.

There are two attitudes which we may here assume. One, which commends itself, quite apart from evangelical considerations, to the instinct of gentlemanhood, is to regard the wrong-doer with disdain and ignore his evil behaviour—an effective attitude and often indeed the best safeguard against fresh outrage. An apt illustration is a story of the philosopher Plato. He visited the court of Dionysius of Syracuse, and the tyrant,

offended by his boldness of speech, was minded to kill him but contented himself with selling him into slavery. Plato's friends bought him, and he returned home to Athens ; and then Dionysius, apprehensive of reprisals, wrote the philosopher a conciliatory letter, begging him to let bygones be bygones. Plato replied that so busy was he that he had forgotten all about it. That was indeed a sharp revenge ; but still more effective is the way which the Apostle recommends—the way of that humorous Hebrew proverb (Pr. xxv. 21, 22). Watch for an opportunity to do your enemy a kindness ; and then, if there be any good in him, he will be stricken with burning shame. You could not pain him more, not though you cast him into a furnace and shot down live coals (cf. Ps. cxx. 4) on his head. It is told of the Athenian statesman Pericles that once he was violently assailed in the forum by a malignant opponent. The livelong day he quietly endured it, and after nightfall the fellow followed him to his door, reviling him all the way ; and on entering he bade his attendant get a torch and escort his tormentor safe home.

2. CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP

xiii

I *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are *ordained of God.*

2 *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

3 *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*

4 *For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

5 *Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*

6 *For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.*

7 *Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.*

8 *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*

9 *For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

10 *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

11 *And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.*

* Or, ordered.

12 *The night is far spent, the day is at hand : let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*

13 *Let us walk *honestly, as in the day ; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.*

14 *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

IT was expedient that the Apostle should discourse hereon, since at the outset the Christians were generally regarded as merely a Jewish sect ; and the Jews were a turbulent race, dreaming of a Messiah, a national deliverer who would “ restore the kingdom to Israel,” continually plotting in their own land rebellion against the Roman government, and where they settled abroad despising and insulting their Gentile neighbours—“ haters of the rest of mankind,” as the Latin historian terms them. The Christians shared their merited reproach, and the Apostle here counsels his readers to vindicate their character as good citizens. “ Let every soul be subject to supreme authorities.”

It was mainly to this passage that appeal was made in the seventeenth century by the Royalist preachers, who advocated the divine right of kings and the duty of passive obedience, maintaining that, as Jeremy Taylor has it in his *Ductor Dubitantium*, “ it is not lawful for subjects to rebel, or to take up arms against the supreme power of the nation upon any pretence whatsoever.” In truth that question does not here arise ; for, as St. Chrysostom pointed out, it is not to *governors* but to *government* that the Apostle inculcates subjection. “ There is no authority but by God, and the existing authorities have been ordered by God. And so one who opposeth the authority is in resistance to God’s ordinance ; and the resisters will bring doom upon themselves.” It is righteous authority that is here in question ; and it was a righteous authority that Rome had established throughout her wide Empire, as the Apostle had himself repeatedly experienced when he was shielded by the Roman law from Jewish and heathen violence (cf. Ac. xvii. 8,

* Or, *decently*.

9; xviii. 12-17; xix. 35-41). And so he says "the existing authorities have been ordered by God." Reverence for constituted authority is essential to social well-being; for where laws are flouted, anarchy ensues, and the weak are at the mercy of the strong. And therefore, said the sage Heraclitus, "the people should fight for the law as for a bulwark." Even a hard law is better than none. Better tyranny than license. "Galba succeeded Nero," says Bacon, "and his age being despised, there was much license and confusion in Rome during his empire; whereupon a senator said in full senate, it were better to live where nothing is lawful, than where all things are lawful."

Orderly government is costly, but it is worth the cost and repays it a thousandfold. For in the welfare of the community lies the welfare of each member thereof, and he serves himself as he shares the common burden. So Ruskin has taught us. "The curé of a little village near Bellinzona, to whom I had expressed wonder that the peasants allowed the Ticino to flood their fields, told me that they would not join to build an effectual embankment high up the valley, because everybody said 'that would help his neighbours as much as himself.' So every proprietor built a bit of low embankment about his own field; and the Ticino, as soon as it had a mind, swept away and swallowed up all together." This lesson the Apostle enforces by inculcating the special duty of ungrudging submission to the imperial taxation, so distasteful as it was to the subject races, especially the Jews (cf. Mt. xxii. 15-22). It was in their own interest, since, as the Roman historian has it, "neither quiet of nations can be had without arms, nor arms without pay, nor pay without taxes." By paying tribute they were maintaining orderly government, without which there is no civilisation, no security, no industry or traffic, no prosperity.

Hence in paying tribute they were not submitting to an exaction: they were discharging a debt, and it is a Christian duty to "render to all their dues" and "owe no man anything, except," adds the Apostle with a deft turn of quiet humour, "to love one another"—that "debt immense," in Milton's phrase, which we can never quit, "still paying, still to owe." Here lies the secret of good citizenship. One who "loves his neighbour

as himself " needs no statutory constraint ; for " love is the fulfilling of the law."

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.

And it becomes believers so to live, as redeemed men in a redeemed world, illumined with heavenly light and moving onward to the final consummation. " Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ " says the Apostle, employing an Old Testament phrase. Where it is written (cf. Jud. vi. 34 ; 1 Chr. xii. 18 ; 2 Chr. xxiv. 20) that " the Spirit of the Lord came upon a man," the Hebrew properly signifies that the Spirit " clothed " the man. And even so should a Christian be " clothed with Christ "—a re-incarnation of his Glorified Lord.

3. CHRISTIAN CHARITY

xiv

1 *Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but *not to doubtful disputations.*

2 *For one believeth that he may eat all things : another, who is weak, eateth herbs.*

3 *Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not ; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth : for God hath received him.*

4 *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant ? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up : for God is able to make him stand.*

5 *One man esteemeth one day above another : another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be †fully persuaded in his own mind.*

6 *He that ‡regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord ; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks ; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.*

7 *For none of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself.*

8 *For whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*

9 *For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*

10 *But why dost thou judge thy brother ? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother ? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*

11 *For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.*

12 *So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*

* Or, not to judge his doubtful thoughts.

† Or, fully assured.

‡ Or, observeth.

13 *Let us not therefore judge one another any more : but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.*

14 *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing *unclean of itself : but to him that esteemeth any thing to be *unclean, to him it is unclean.*

15 *But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not †charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.*

16 *Let not then your good be evil spoken of :*

17 *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

18 *For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.*

19 *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*

20 *For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure ; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.*

21 *It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.*

22 *Hast thou faith ? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.*

23 *And he that ‡doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith : for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

ASCETICISM was in the air at that period. Among the Gentiles it was fostered in earnest minds by a revival of the Pythagorean philosophy which, holding the theory of Transmigration, forbade the eating of flesh lest perchance one should be violating the lodging of a parent's or kinsman's soul. And among the devouter sort of Jews it was encouraged by the teaching and example of the Essenes, those holy anchorites who had their principal settlement in the Wilderness of En-Gedi, where they subsisted on the fruits of their industry, abjuring the lusts of the flesh, fasting frequently, and

* Gr. common.

† Gr. according to charity.

‡ Or, discerneth and putteth a difference between meats.

constantly abstaining from flesh and wine. The ascetic spirit had infected the Church, and it provoked much dissension. Its votaries condemned what they deemed the laxity of their more liberal brethren; while the latter retaliated by "despising them" or, as the original rather signifies, "setting them at naught," resenting their censoriousness and ridiculing what they deemed a narrow and fantastic scrupulosity.

It was a vexatious situation, bringing reproach upon the Church; and here the Apostle does not debate the merits of the controversy but counsels mutual forbearance, urging three considerations.

1. It was an open question (vers. 1-3). Both parties were true believers, loving the Lord and seeking in their different ways to honour Him; and his argument is that since God had received both, it became them to receive one another—"not for discussion of disputed opinions." "Sir," wrote Cromwell to Major Crawford, 10th March, 1643, "the State, in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to serve it—that satisfies." And there is room in the Church for all good men.

2. The right of private judgment (vers. 4-12). "Let each be satisfied in his own mind." If he be wrong, it is to the Lord that he is responsible. For the Lord alone is Judge; and when "we all stand side by side at His Bar," who is there that will not need mercy?

3. The duty of charity (vers. 13-23). The Christian rule is that we should "walk charitably" or more properly "comport ourselves as love dictates"; and the Apostle enforces it by two pithy maxims.

(1) "The noble course is to refrain from eating flesh and drinking wine and everything which is a stumbling-block to thy brother" (ver. 21)—a counsel of chivalry addressed especially to the liberal sort who, like the Apostle himself, had no sympathy with the scruples of their narrow brethren but, unlike him, were disposed to treat them with contempt. And it has a wide and varied application. For example, Sir Walter Scott tells from his youthful remembrance how it came about that after the Jacobite rebellion the two high-spirited parties, so lately in

arms, drew together and were so soon welded in amity. The victors studiously avoided offence. They would speak of "the Chevalier," and never either of "the Prince," sacrificing their own principles, or of "the Pretender," insulting their vanquished rivals ; nor would they speak of "the rebellion" and "the rebels" but of "the affair of '45" and those who had been "out in the '45." And in a changeful world a like chivalry is most needful in the intercourse of the old with their cherished memories and the young with their fresh outlook. "It is," says George MacDonald, "because the young cannot recognise the youth of the aged, and the old will not acknowledge the experience of the young that they repel each other." It is ever thus. "The young," remonstrated an elder with a youthful enthusiast in Reformation days, "always speak of the old as if they had been born old. Do you think our hearts never throbbed high with hope, and that we never fought with dragons? Yet the old serpent is not killed yet. Nor will he be dead when we are dead, and you are old, and your grandchildren take their place in the old fight, and think they are fighting the first battle the world has seen, and vanquishing the last enemy."

(2) "All food is clean, but it is bad for one to eat it if he have scruples about it" (ver. 20) ; "one who hath misgivings standeth condemned if he eat, because it is not the outcome of faith ; and everything which is not the outcome of faith is sin" (ver. 23)—a generous justification of a sensitive scrupulosity which the Apostle did not share. Whatever is doubtful to you is wrong for you : have nothing to do with it. Err on the safe side. As Robert Burns has it :

The fear o' Hell's a hangman's whip
To haud the wretch in order ;
But where you feel your Honor grip,
Let that aye be your border ;
Its slightest touches, instant pause—
Debar a' side-pretences ;
And resolutely keep its laws,
Uncaring consequences.

PERSONAL MESSAGES

xv, xvi

COVERING LETTER TO ROME

XV

1 *We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

2 *Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.*

3 *For even Christ pleased not himself ; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.*

4 *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

5 *Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another *according to Christ Jesus :*

6 *That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

7 *Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.*

8 *Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers :*

9 *And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy ; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.*

10 *And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.*

11 *And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles ; and laud him, all ye people.*

12 *And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles ; in him shall the Gentiles trust.*

* Or, after the example of.

13 *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

14 *And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.*

15 *Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,*

16 *That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the *offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*

17 *I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.*

18 *For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,*

19 *Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God ; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.*

20 *Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation :*

21 *But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see : and they that have not heard shall understand.*

22 *For which cause also I have been †much hindered from coming to you.*

23 *But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you ;*

24 *Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you : for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled ‡with your company.*

25 *But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.*

26 *For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.*

* Or, sacrificing.

† Or, many ways, or, oftentimes.

‡ Gr. with you.

27 *It hath pleased them verily ; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.*

28 *When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.*

29 *And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.*

30 *Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me ;*

31 *That I may be delivered from them that *do not believe in Judæa ; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints ;*

32 *That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.*

33 *Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.*

SEVERAL important authorities—manuscripts, ancient versions, and Fathers—append the final doxology (xvi. 25–27) to chap. xiv ; and this is its proper position, marking the close of the encyclical (see Introduction). When the latter was despatched to its various destinations, it was accompanied in each instance by a covering letter ; and here is the covering letter which accompanied it to Rome.

There is no express record of the origin of the Christian Church at Rome, but it was founded early, doubtless by those Roman Jews who, attending the Feast of Pentecost (cf. Ac. ii. 10), witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and carried home the tidings. It was thus originally a purely Jewish community, and so apparently it, for the most part, still continued, remote as it was from Jerusalem and acquainted only by report with that momentous development—the ingathering of the Gentiles. This would inevitably excite dissension, all the more that the Roman believers had never yet been visited by St. Paul or heard from his own lips a vindication of his Gospel. Therefore it was

* Or, *are disobedient*.

that he included them among the recipients of his encyclical on Justification by Faith, in order to acquaint them with his doctrine and disarm their hostility.

See how gracious is his appeal (vers. 1-21). The Jewish residents at Rome, with their racial aptitude for trading, were generally prosperous ; and not only would they pride themselves on their standing as citizens of the world's metropolis but they would be scornful of such Gentiles as professed the Christian Faith among them, since in early days these generally belonged to the lower order, mostly slaves. And so the Apostle appeals to their chivalry. " We who have power ought to bear their weaknesses who have none," reinforcing the appeal by the example of " the Christ (the Messiah)." " Receive one another," he says, " even as the Christ also received us for the glory of God " ; and by quotations from all the three divisions of the Scriptures—the Law, the Prophets, and the Sacred Writings (Ps. xviii. 49 ; Dt. xxxii. 43 ; Ps. cxvii. 1 ; Is. xi. 10)—he reminds them that the ingathering of the Gentiles was no heretical innovation but the fulfilment of an ancient hope. And then he introduces himself as " the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles," and adduces the large work which he had accomplished as God's attestation of his commission.

He had a further object in mentioning his extensive labours in the East, " from Jerusalem and all round as far as Illyricum." The Roman Christians were aggrieved that he had never visited them ; and he assures them that to see Rome and preach the Gospel there was an ambition which he had long cherished (cf. Ac. xix. 21), and now that he had accomplished his work in the East, his design was to prosecute a mission in the West and carry the Gospel as far as Spain, visiting Rome by the way. He would fain have set forth immediately from Corinth where he was now writing ; but, he explains, taking opportunity to apprise his Jewish readers of the generous sympathy of his Gentile converts with their Jewish fellow-believers, the impoverished Christians in the sacred capital, he must first convey thither the fund which the churches of Macedonia and Achaia had contributed for their relief (cf. 2 Cor. ix. 1-4 ; Ac. xxiv. 17). His intention meanwhile was that " after accomplishing this

errand and putting them in possession of this harvest " (ver. 28) he should embark on the western mission. But he warns his readers of the trouble which he anticipated in Judæa and which might, as it actually did, frustrate his design ; and he solicits their prayers on his behalf.

COVERING LETTER TO EPHESUS

xvi. I-20

1 *I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea :*

2 *That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you : for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.*

3 *Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus :*

4 *Who have for my life laid down their own necks : unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.*

5 *Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epænetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.*

6 *Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.*

7 *Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.*

8 *Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.*

9 *Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.*

10 *Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' *household.*

11 *Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the *household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.*

12 *Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.*

13 *Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.*

14 *Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.*

15 *Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.*

* Or, friends.

16 *Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.*

17 *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned ; and avoid them.*

18 *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly ; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

19 *For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf : but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and *simple concerning evil.*

20 *And the God of peace shall †bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

IT stamps this as a letter to Ephesus, accompanying the copy of the encyclical sent thither for distribution among the churches of Asia, that the only three now known to us of the friends whom the Apostle greets resided there (see Introduction). In those days, when there was no public post, a private letter was conveyed to its destination by a hired courier, or else by an acquaintance of the writer who happened conveniently to be travelling thither. So it was that the encyclical was conveyed to Ephesus. Cenchreæ was the eastern sea-port of Corinth, and there dwelt and ministered a devoted Christian, Phœbe, not “a servant” but “a deaconess,” who, as her office required, rendered the womanly ministration of nursing the sick, and who, it would appear, had thus “succoured” the Apostle four years previously when he fell sick there as he was setting sail for home at the close of his second mission (see exposition of Ac. xviii. 18).

It was less than a year since the Apostle had left Ephesus after a ministry of two years and a quarter—his longest in any one city. Thus he had many friends there, and he takes the opportunity of greeting such as had most endeared themselves to him. He begins with his old and tried friends Prisca and Aquila (cf. Ac. xviii. 2, 3, 18), whose house at Ephesus was, as

* Or, harmless.

† Or, tread.

the phrase "the church in their house" signifies, a meeting-place of the believers; and then Epænetus, whom he remembered kindly as the earliest of his Ephesian converts—"the first-fruits of (not "Achaia" but) Asia for Christ." The rest are all unknown save for their mention here. At least four of them besides Prisca and Aquila were Jews: Mary, as her name proves, and Andronicus, Junia or perhaps Junias (masc.), and Herodion, as the Apostle intimates when he calls them his "kinsmen," meaning his "countrymen" (cf. ix. 3). Andronicus and Junias he styles also "once my fellow-captives," meaning probably that they had shared his imprisonment on some unrecorded occasion during his troublous sojourn at Ephesus (cf. 2 Cor. i. 8). They were old believers, converted before the Apostle, and while yet in their own land they had won the esteem of the Apostles at Jerusalem, and still retained it. The "households" of Aristobulus and Narcissus were slaves, the domestic entourage of wealthy heathen citizens.

The Apostle has only commendation for his friends at Ephesus, and he closes his greetings by telling them that (not simply "the" but) "all the churches of Christ saluted them." Their reputation was wide-spread, and wherever he went, he heard their praises. Since he had so lately left them, they needed no special counsel, but he takes the opportunity of warning them afresh against the heresy which, even while he was with them, had been at work in the Province (cf. Ac. xx. 29, 30) and which he had to handle seriously five years later in the Prison Epistles (Eph., Col.).

GREETINGS AND DOXOLOGY

xvi. 21-27

21 *Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.*

22 *I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.*

23 *Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.*

24 *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

25 *Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,*

26 *But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith :*

27 *To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.*

IN those days, when correspondence was difficult and costly, it was customary that, besides the writer's greetings, a letter should convey the greetings of friends who shared his goodwill. And here (vers. 21-24), in a note which would be appended to each of the covering letters, we find the greetings sent to the several communities by a little company of the Apostle's associates who were with him at the writing of the encyclical. First his young attendant Timothy (cf. Ac. xvi. 1, 2) and three Jewish Christians, his "countrymen" (cf. vers. 7, 11), Lucius, Jason (cf. Ac. xvii. 7), and Sosipater. Then Tertius, who acted in this instance as his amanuensis. It was usually Timothy who served him in that capacity (cf. 2 Cor. i. 1 ; Phil. i. 1 ; Col. i. 1 ; 1 Th. i. 1 ; Phm. 1) ; but, since special skill was required for the writing of a long encyclical and the making of numerous copies,

the task was now entrusted to Tertius, probably a professional scribe. Further, Gaius, a prosperous and kindly member of the Corinthian church, who proved his gratitude to his spiritual father (cf. 1 Cor. i. 14) by entertaining him in his hospitable home during his stay in the city. Possibly Tertius was his private secretary. And with him Erastus, the Chamberlain or Treasurer of the city, and Quartus, whose Latin name suggests that he may have been an imperial official.

The magnificent doxology wherewith the epistle closes (vers. 25-27), is the termination of the encyclical and has, as we have seen, its rightful place at the close of chap. xiv. It has a twofold theological interest. (1) It defines the significance of the word "mystery" in the Apostle's crowning argument (cf. xi. 25), where he vindicates his faith in the restoration of Israel, now rejected for her unbelief, and the ultimate salvation of all mankind. (2) The authentic text runs: "To Him that is of power to stablish you . . . the only wise God through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory"—an ungrammatical sentence. The Apostle had purposed writing "to the only wise God through Jesus Christ be the glory"; but when he mentioned the blessed name, he forgot grammar and ascribed the glory to Him. And so he let it stand. A blunder in syntax, it was a confession of the truth—that our Lord is "very God of very God."

FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL
TO THE CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

CORINTH was the political and commercial capital of Achaia, as Greece was denominated now that she was subject to imperial Rome and ranked as a senatorial province ; and its church was founded by St. Paul during his eighteen months' ministry there (Sep., 51–Feb., 53) in the course of his second mission (cf. Ac. xvii. 1–18). It was a perilous abode for the Gospel, since Corinth, honourably famed of old for art—painting, sculpture, and working in bronze—was not only plagued with a spirit of intellectual pretension but held in evil repute for licentiousness. It is no marvel that the church was disgraced by frequent scandals and, as St. Clement testified a full generation later, rent with continual dissension.

Hardly had the Apostle taken his departure from the city when trouble arose. It was occasioned by a case of shocking immorality (cf. 1 Cor. v). Tidings thereof reached him at Ephesus, where he was now employed in his long ministry of two years and a quarter (Oct., 53–Jan., 56) ; and immediately he despatched a letter (cf. 1 Cor. x. 9–11), reproving the iniquity and requiring exemplary discipline. No answer was returned ; and at length in February, 55 (cf. 1 Cor. v. 6–8), hearing a report (cf. i. 11) that so far were the Corinthians from repenting that they were engaged in a disputation regarding the rival merits of various teachers, he started the writing of this great letter, the first of his two extant “ Epistles to the Corinthians.”

SUMMARY

	PASSAGE	PAGE
PREFACE	i. 1-9	407

EVIL REPORT OF THE CORINTHIANS

(i. 10-vi)

1. INTELLECTUALISM (i. 10-iv) :		
(1) THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS	i. 10-31	411
(2) THE HIDDEN WISDOM OF THE GOSPEL	ii	415
(3) THE FOLLY OF INTELLECTUALISM	iii	418
(4) AN IMPASSIONED REMONSTRANCE	iv	422
2. A FOUL SCANDAL	v	426
3. LITIGATION	vi	430

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

(vii-xvi)

1. SEXUAL RELATIONS (vii) :		
(1) MARRIAGE	vii. 1-24	437
(2) VIRGINITY	vii. 25-40	441
2. THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS (viii-xi. 1) :		
(1) THE LIBERAL ATTITUDE	viii	445
(2) THE APOSTLE'S EXAMPLE	ix	448
(3) THEORY OF SACRAMENTAL SECURITY	x-xi. 1	452
3. ABUSES IN PUBLIC WORSHIP (xi. 2-34) :		
(1) THE POSITION OF WOMEN	xi. 2-16	458
(2) THE LOVE-FEAST	xi. 17-34	462
4. SPIRITUAL GIFTS (xii-xiv) :		
(1) THEIR DIVERSITY	xii. 1-30	466
(2) THE SUPREMACY OF LOVE	xii. 31-xiii	470
(3) SPEAKING WITH TONGUES	xiv	475
5. THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY (xv) :		
(1) EVIDENCE OF OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION	xv. 1-19	481
(2) THE ISSUES AT STAKE	xv. 20-34	484
(3) THE INTELLECTUAL PROBLEM	xv. 35-58	488
6. THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS	xvi	493

PREFACE

i. 1-9

1 *Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother.*

2 *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's :*

3 *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

4 *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ ;*

5 *That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge ;*

6 *Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you :*

7 *So that ye come behind in no gift ; waiting for the *coming of our Lord Jesus Christ :*

8 *Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

9 *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

SOSTHENES, "the (not " our ") brother," whose name the Apostle here couples with his own, was probably one of his Ephesian converts (see exposition of Ac. xviii. 17), who served as his amanuensis. Nowhere are his courtesy, his generosity, his tactfulness, and withal his severity more strikingly exhibited than in this gracious introduction. Though his heart was hot within at the evil behaviour of his Corinthian converts, he hides his resentment and writes never a hard word.

* Gr. revelation.

At the first glance it might seem that he had nothing but commendation for them ; yet in truth his commendation was their heavy condemnation.

(1) He addresses them as " the Church of God which is at Corinth." " A glad and huge paradox ! " is the learned and saintly Bengel's illuminating comment. For what a wealth of grace it reveals that there should have been a " Church of God " in a city whose name was, even in heathendom, a byword for uncleanness ! And the Apostle points the moral when he defines what a " Church of God " means—" men sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, in fellowship with all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours." It is a sharp admonition ; and they would feel its sting, remembering how far short they fell of that ideal, how far they were from realising the fellowship of the saints while harbouring in their midst a hideous evil which the very heathen abhorred (cf. v. 1).

(2) Corinth was an intellectual city, and the atmosphere of its schools of rhetoric and philosophy pervaded the church. And this was all to the good. For there is no human aptitude or acquirement which may not be consecrated to Christ and employed in His service ; and the Apostle congratulates his readers that they " came behind in no gift—no gift of grace," as it is in the original, particularly " all speech (cf. ii. 1) and all knowledge." These were indeed rich and precious gifts of grace, and their endowment therewith was " a confirmation of the testimony of Christ in them," a fulfilment of His promises (cf. Mt. x. 19, 20 ; Jo. xiv. 26, xvi. 13). But his congratulation was in truth a veiled censure ; nor would they miss it, knowing as they did how ill a use they were making of their endowments. The Gospel must be tricked out with " enticing words " (cf. ii. 4), or they would have none of it. And they turned it into a philosophy. For what was their " waiting for the (not " coming " but) revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. viii. 18, 19) " ? It was a metaphysical disputation regarding the blessed hope of the Resurrection (cf. xv. 12, 35).

EVIL REPORT OF THE CORINTHIANS

i. 10-vi

1. INTELLECTUALISM (i. 10-iv)

(1) THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS

i. 10-31

10 *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no *divisions among you ; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

11 *For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.*

12 *Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul ; and I of Apollos ; and I of Cephas ; and I of Christ.*

13 *Is Christ divided ? was Paul crucified for you ? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul ?*

14 *I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius ;*

15 *Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.*

16 *And I baptized also the household of Stephanas : besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.*

17 *For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel : not with wisdom of †words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.*

18 *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness ; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

19 *For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.*

20 *Where is the wise ? where is the scribe ? where is the disputer of this world ? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world ?*

21 *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom*

* Gr. schisms.

† Or, speech.

knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 *For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom :*

23 *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ;*

24 *But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

25 *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men ; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

26 *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called :*

27 *But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ;*

28 *And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are :*

29 *That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

30 *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption :*

31 *That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

A FRESH report of the unhappy state of his church at Corinth had reached the Apostle (see Introduction). "It hath just been shown me," he says, "by those of Chloe." So it is in the original ; and the reference would be intelligible to his readers, but we can only guess who these his informants may have been. Most probably Chloe was a Christian lady engaged at Corinth, like Lydia at Philippi (cf. Ac. xvi. 14), in some trade, and "those of Chloe" were her representatives who had visited Ephesus in the way of business and told how things were going. Especially they reported a development which touched him to the quick. Over a year ago that brilliant Alexandrian Apollos (cf. Ac. xviii. 24-28) had settled at Corinth, and his learning and eloquence had appealed to those Greek converts who still hankered after the metaphysical discussions and oratorical displays of their sophists in the schools of rhetoric.

They were the "intellectuals" of the Corinthian church, and they lauded Apollos to the disparagement of the Apostle, whom they characterised as "rude in speech"—"his bodily presence weak and his speech contemptible" (cf. 2 Cor. x. 10, xi. 6). Criticism was directed against him also from another quarter. The Judaists (cf. Ac. xv. 1), who had occasioned so much trouble at Antioch, in Galatia, and in Macedonia, had pursued him to Corinth and were challenging his apostolic authority, exalting Peter or Cephas, as they rather styled him in their Aramaic (cf. Jo. i. 42; Gal. ii. 9, 11, 14).

And thus there had arisen no fewer than four warring factions: (1) The faithful souls who remembered the debt they owed to their father in Christ, and whose cry was "I am of Paul"; (2) the intellectuals who swore by Apollos; (3) the Judaists who swore by Cephas; and (4) a sanctimonious order affecting disdain of all human teachers and professing themselves "of Christ." Or rather perhaps, according to an ancient interpretation, there were only three parties—the supporters of Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, and the clause "I am of Christ" introduces the Apostle's indignant protest. "I of Paul," "I of Apollos," "I of Cephas" were the party cries. "But," he retorts, "I am of Christ"—not the head of a party but a preacher of the one and only Saviour. It was the Cross of Christ that he had preached to the Corinthians; it was in the name of Christ, not in the name of Paul, that they had been baptised; and he was glad now to remember how few of them he had baptised with his own hands—only two, Crispus (cf. Ac. xviii. 8) and Gaius (cf. Rom. xvi. 23). It was not his wont to baptise his converts himself. His office was preaching the Gospel, and he relegated the administration of the sacrament to his coadjutors; and the reason of those two exceptions at the beginning of his Corinthian ministry is that he was then alone, awaiting his comrade Silas and his attendant Timothy whom he had left in Macedonia on his flight thence (cf. Ac. xvii. 14). There was indeed another of the Corinthians whom for the same reason he had baptised—his valued friend Stephanas (cf. xvi. 15, 17); and on revising the letter he explained the seeming omission in a marginal note (ver. 16). Stephanas was

now resident at Corinth, but it was not there that he had been won for Christ. Since he and his household were "the first-fruits of Achaia," and Athens was the first city of Achaia where the Apostle preached (cf. Ac. xvii. 15-34), it appears that they had formerly resided there and had since settled at Corinth.

And now the Apostle takes up the Corinthian criticisms of himself and his preaching. To the Jews with their dream of a kingly Messiah his Gospel of "a crucified Christ" was a stumbling-block, while to the philosophic Greeks it was foolishness; and his answer, especially to the latter, is twofold. (1) The way of human wisdom had been tried, and it had notoriously failed. "The world through its wisdom knew not God." And the Gospel by satisfying the long yearning of humanity had proved itself indeed "the power of God." "Where," asks St. Chrysostom in his fourth Homily on the Book of Acts, and each succeeding generation has driven the question farther home, "where now is the pride of Greece? Where the name of Athens? Where the babble of the philosophers? The man of Galilee, the man of Bethsaida, the peasant, has survived them all." (2) Evermore it is God's way, as though mocking the counsel of the wise, to choose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and the weak to confound the strong. Alexander the Great was little, and so were Æsop, Julius Cæsar, Nelson, and Napoleon, *Petit Corporal*, and Athanasius who stood "alone against the world." Alexander was a hunchback to boot, and Attila, "the Scourge of God," was little and misshapen. Homer was a beggar; and he was blind, and so were Ossian, and Milton, and George Matheson who "traced the rainbow through the rain." Epictetus was a slave; and he was a cripple, and so were Shakespeare, Scott, Byron, and Kelvin. And Beethoven—

though so deaf he could not hear the tempest for a token,
He made the music of his mind the grandest ever spoken.

The Apostle was in goodly company when he was scorned for the weakness of his bodily presence. "Three cubits in stature," it was said of him, "yet he touched the stars."

(2) THE HIDDEN WISDOM OF THE GOSPEL

ii

1 *And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.*

2 *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

3 *And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.*

4 *And my speech and my preaching was not with *enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power :*

5 *That your faith should not †stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

6 *Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect : yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought :*

7 *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory :*

8 *Which none of the princes of this world knew : for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

10 *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit : for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*

11 *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him ? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*

12 *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God : that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

13 *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth ; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

* Or, *persuasive*.

† Gr. *be*.

14 *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,*

15 *But he that is spiritual *judgeth all things, yet he himself is †judged of no man.*

16 *For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he ‡may instruct him ? But we have the mind of Christ.*

IT was not without reason that the Corinthian intellectuals remarked the unadorned simplicity of the Apostle's preaching. For when he appeared among them some three years and a half ago, he was not merely enfeebled with sickness but smarting under the humiliation which he had incurred in the court of the Areopagus (see exposition of Ac. xviii. 1). On that occasion, in the hope of winning his philosophical audience, he had engaged in a philosophical argument, and in view of the issue he had vowed that never more would he depart from the apostolic office of simply testifying to the Risen Lord (cf. Jo. xv. 26, 27 ; Ac. i. 8, xx. 21). "My determination," he says (ver. 2), "was to know nothing among you except Jesus as Christ, and that a crucified Christ." And he had stedfastly maintained his resolution.

Hence the disparagement of his preaching by the Corinthian intellectuals. And it was their own condemnation. For in truth the Gospel of a crucified Christ is the deepest wisdom. It is the revelation of a providential "mystery" (see exposition of Rom. xi. 25), God's purpose of universal grace, hidden for ages but now at length gloriously manifested. Foolishness to unbelieving minds, it is nevertheless "the wisdom of God," so profound, so majestic, that to trick it out with the arts of rhetoric were sheer desecration, and to construe it in terms of philosophy were like taking up the ocean in a bucket. As St. Gregory the Great expressed it in an oft-repeated similitude, it is like a river with shallows where a lamb may wade and an elephant may swim. And when the intellectuals disdained its simplicity, they only betrayed their intellectual barrenness, proving themselves, as the Apostle presently affirms (cf. iii. 1), mere "babes in Christ."

* Or, discerneth.

† Or, discerned.

‡ Gr. shall.

So says he here (ver. 6) : " It is wisdom that we talk among " not " the perfect " but " the mature—the full-grown " (cf. xiii. 10, 11, xiv. 20 ; Heb. v. 14).

Their intellectualism was mere childishness. They lacked the illumination of the Holy Spirit ; and what sight is in the physical domain, this the illumination of the Spirit is in the spiritual. " A merely intellectual man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God "—" things which," in the language of the prophet (cf. Is. lxiv. 4, lxv. 16, 17), " eye never saw and ear never heard, and the heart of man never dreamed, all the things which God prepared for those who love Him." Hence their disdain of the Gospel's simplicity. Lucid exposition is ever the mark of a master ; and had they " known the things which have been graciously bestowed on us by God," they would have talked thereof " not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual things with spiritual "—not " darkening counsel by words without knowledge," the high-flown rhetoric of the schools, but clothing the sacred truth in simple, artless, reverent speech.

(3) THE FOLLY OF INTELLECTUALISM

iii

1 *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.*

2 *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat : for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*

3 *For ye are yet carnal : for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and *divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk †as men ?*

4 *For while one saith, I am of Paul ; and another, I am of Apollos ; are ye not carnal ?*

5 *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man ?*

6 *I have planted, Apollos watered ; but God gave the increase.*

7 *So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.*

8 *Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one : and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.*

9 *For we are labourers together with God : ye are God's ‡husbandry, ye are God's building.*

10 *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*

11 *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

12 *Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ;*

13 *Every man's work shall be made manifest : for the day shall declare it, because it §shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

* Or, factions:

† Gr. according to man.

‡ Or, tillage.

§ Gr. is revealed.

14 *If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.*

15 *If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire.*

16 *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ?*

17 *If any man *defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy ; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.*

18 *Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise.*

19 *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.*

20 *And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.*

21 *Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are your's ;*

22 *Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are your's ;*

23 *And ye are Christ's ; and Christ is God's.*

HERE the Apostle passes from defence to attack. Whose fault was it that, while he ministered among them, his teaching had been so simple and rudimentary? It was their own. So dull were they, so irreceptive of spiritual ideas despite their intellectual pretensions, that he had to deal with them not as spiritual men but as—not “carnal” but—“creatures of flesh” (cf. Rom. vii. 14, where see exposition), that is, as he explains, mere “babes” with minds undeveloped, needing to be fed not with “strong meat” (cf. Heb. v. 12, 13) but with milk. And babes, alas! they still remained. For what was their wrangling but sheer childishness, and that worst sort of childishness—the childishness of grown men? Their pitting of teacher against teacher proved their imperviousness to the truth which their teachers proclaimed each in his several way. Apollos and he alike were only God's ministers. He had planted the good seed when he came among them, and then Apollos had

* Or, *destroy*.

succeeded him and watered it. But neither could have accomplished anything alone, since planting and watering are unavailing unless God give the increase. It was God's work, and the various teachers were merely His workmen. "Ye are God's tilth," he says; and the question which concerned them was what manner of harvest they were producing.

Here, to make the lesson clearer, he abruptly changes the metaphor from husbandry to building: "God's tilth, God's building are ye." It was he that had instituted the Corinthian church. He had laid the foundation, and he had laid it firm and true; and when he took his departure, others had taken his place and continued the work. And here was the test: Were they building on the foundation which he had laid, the one and only foundation—Jesus Christ and His Atonement? It was the condemnation of the Judaists that they were building on another foundation, forasmuch as they rejected the Gospel of salvation by faith and rested salvation on the works of the Law. And what of the intellectuals? It is possible for a man to be building on the true foundation and yet be building ill—building a worthless superstructure which will not stand the strain; and that was their fault. They did not indeed, like the Judaists, reject the basal article of Justification by Faith. They built on Jesus Christ, and so far it was well with them: they were true Christians, and they would inherit salvation. But theirs would be a bare salvation, since they were building badly. They were not busying themselves with "repentance, love, and new obedience," but delighting in "excellency of speech or of wisdom"; and this, for all its glitter, was poor, perishing stuff. It would all go for naught, mere rubbish, on the Day of Judgment, that final assize which will test men's work like a fierce fire. They would indeed be saved, forasmuch as they trusted to the atoning sacrifice of the crucified Christ, but their work would perish. They would be "saved, yet so as through fire," like "brands plucked out of the burning" (cf. Am. iv. 11; Zech. iii. 2).

There is thus a twofold requirement: (1) that we should build on the true and only foundation, and this is absolutely essential; and (2) that we should rear upon it an enduring fabric, such as will abide God's scrutiny. Whether it be a stately

palace that we are building, resplendent with gold and silver and gems, or a humble cot with wooden walls, thatched with hay and stubble, the question is whether the fabric will stand the test. Perhaps the Apostle was thinking, nor could his readers fail to think, of the pillage and burning of their city by the Roman army under Lucius Mummius in 146 B.C., when the horrified citizens beheld priceless pictures torn down by the rude soldiery to serve as dice-boards at the division of the spoil. All her flimsy grandeur perished in the flames, but the solid masonry survived and was restored by Julius Cæsar a century later.

And see how the Apostle interprets the parable to the Corinthians. What was it that they were building? It was—not “the Temple” but—“a Sanctuary of God” (see exposition of Jo. ii. 19), a living Sanctuary whose stones, all precious (cf. Rev. xxi. 18–21), are living men, redeemed and consecrated. “Know ye not that ye are God’s Sanctuary, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If one is spoiling God’s Sanctuary, him will God spoil. For the Sanctuary of God is holy; and,” he adds with gentle admonition, “so are ye.” Holy they must needs be—else there was no place for them in the sacred fabric. And since “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God,” it was not merely a dread risk that they were running—the risk of shame on the Day when every man’s work will be tried as by fire. They were sustaining a present loss. For partisanship narrows the heart. The truth is ever larger than the doctrine of any school, and the adherents of Paul or Apollos or Cephas enjoyed only so much thereof as their chosen master could communicate. Christ is the supreme Master, the Teacher of teachers; and if He be our Master, then “all things are ours”—all that Paul knew or Apollos or Cephas. God is ours; for we are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.

(4) AN IMPASSIONED REMONSTRANCE

iv

1 *Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.*

2 *Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*

3 *But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's *judgment : yea, I judge not mine own self.*

4 *For I know nothing by myself ; yet am I not hereby justified : but he that judgeth me is the Lord.*

5 *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts : and then shall every man have praise of God.*

6 *And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes ; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.*

7 *For who †maketh thee to differ from another ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive ? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it ?*

8 *Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us : and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.*

9 *For I think that God hath set forth ‡us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death : for we are made a §spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.*

10 *We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ ; we are weak, but ye are strong ; ye are honourable, but we are despised.*

* Gr. day.

† Gr. distinguisheth thee.

‡ Or, us the last apostles, as.

§ Gr. theatre.

11 *Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace ;*

12 *And labour, working with our own hands : being reviled, we bless ; being persecuted, we suffer it :*

13 *Being defamed, we intreat : we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.*

14 *I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.*

15 *For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers : for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.*

16 *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.*

17 *For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.*

18 *Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you.*

19 *But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.*

20 *For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.*

21 *What will ye ? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness ?*

BENEATH all that the Apostle has written there runs a strong undercurrent of personal resentment. And not without reason. For the Corinthians, forgetting in the heat of controversy the debt which they owed him as their spiritual father (cf. ver. 15), were ungracious and ungenerous in their criticisms of him, sneering not merely at the rudeness of his speech but at the weakness of his bodily presence. Hitherto he has restrained his indignation, but now it breaks out in a flame of scathing protest.

First he challenges their title to sit in judgment on their teachers (vers. 1-5). Whatever the merits or demerits of the latter, they were "ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God (cf. Mt. xiii. 11)"; and who were their glib

critics that they should sit in judgment on their discharge of so sacred a trust, usurping Christ's office and forestalling that solemn Day (cf. iii. 13) when He "will illumine the secrets of darkness and manifest the purposes of our hearts"? "To me," he says, "it matters very little that I should be examined by you or by a human day." Judgment is the Lord's office; and so far are we from being qualified to sit in judgment on our neighbours that we cannot even judge ourselves—such is the deceitfulness of our hearts. "I do not even examine myself; for I am conscious of no fault, yet am I not herein proved righteous." For who truly knows himself? As Wendell Holmes has it, in every man there are three men: (1) the real man, known only to his Maker; (2) the man as he sees himself—never the real man, and often very unlike him; and (3) the man whom the world sees—never the real man, nor the man as he sees himself, but often very unlike either. "My examiner is the Lord."

And now he points the moral in a passage of burning satire (vers. 6-13). "All this is a covert allusion to myself and Apollos on your account, that ye may learn by our example the maxim 'Never travel beyond your brief,' so that in no case may ye windily champion one to the disparagement of the other." They were "travelling beyond their brief" when they assumed the rôle of supercilious critics, forgetting that even were they endowed with such superior wisdom, it was a gift to be humbly employed. True wisdom is never arrogant; and what a pitch of arrogance they had attained! "Already ye are satiated! Already ye have waxed rich! Apart from us"—us, your despised teachers—"ye have come to your kingdom! Ah, would," he cries, "that ye had come to your kingdom, that we might share it with you!"

And herewith he presents the contrast of the contumelious estate of himself and his fellow Apostles. He begins with an arresting metaphor. Under the imperial regime it was the fashion that the spectacles exhibited in the theatre for the amusement of the idle populace should close with a brutal sport—a fight between wild beasts (cf. xv. 32) and condemned criminals, "men appointed to death." This came "last" as the

crowning event of the entertainment. And so he says: "I fancy, God hath exhibited us, the Apostles, last as condemned criminals, forasmuch as we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men." Then he depicts their destitute estate, closing thus: "as the off-scourings of the world have we been made, the scraping of all, to this day." See what this means. The words "off-scouring" and "scraping" denoted originally a worthless rascal, the very scum of society; but they had acquired a sacred signification. It was customary at Athens in time of pestilence or famine that a vile criminal should be cast into the sea as a propitiatory sacrifice to the god Poseidon (Neptune) in the hope of appeasing his wrath. Hence the words came to signify a propitiatory offering, a sin-bearer; and in writing a letter a Greek would subscribe himself "your off-scouring" or "your scraping," meaning "your devoted servant." And so here it is as though the Apostle had written: "as the world's sacrificial victims have we been made, a scape-goat of all."

Here the Apostle's heart smites him, and he curbs his indignation. It pained him to write thus; for the Corinthians with all their faults were his spiritual children—a sacred relationship which endeared them to him and should no less endear him to them. "Though ye have ten thousand tutors in Christ, still ye have not many fathers." And he intimates to them an evidence of his kindly affection. "It is for this very reason that I"—not "have sent" but in the epistolary idiom of the original—"am sending you Timothy." That was his present intention. He would not send the letter to Corinth by an ordinary courier. It would be conveyed thither by his young attendant (see exposition of Ac. xvi. 1), who would not merely deliver it but remind them of his past relations with them and assure them of his constant regard. But alas! he bethinks himself, even this gracious consideration might be misconstrued. For it had been reported to him that some of them were alleging that it was because he was afraid to face them that instead of paying them a personal visit he contented himself with writing letters of remonstrance.

2. A FOUL SCANDAL

V

1 *It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles that one should have his father's wife.*

2 *And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.*

3 *For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have *judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,*

4 *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

5 *To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

6 *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?*

7 *Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover †is sacrificed for us :*

8 *Therefore let us keep ‡the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness ; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

9 *I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators :*

10 *Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolators ; for then must ye needs go out of the world.*

11 *But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ; with such an one no not to eat.*

* Or, determined.

† Or, is slain.

‡ Or, holyday.

12 *For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?*

13 *But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*

THE trouble was that a member of the Corinthian church—"one," says the Apostle, or rather "a certain one," whom he refrains from naming since the reference would be well understood—had contracted a union with his step-mother—not a marriage, since that would have been illegal even if his father were dead. Since it was not required that she should be censured by the church-court, it would seem that she was an unbeliever; and probably they were both Gentiles.

It was a revolting indecency, expressly prohibited by Jewish law (cf. Lev. xviii. 7, 8) and reprobated by the universal instinct of the human heart; nor could the Apostle have credited it unless it had been attested by "a common" or rather "consistent report." On hearing it he had despatched a peremptory injunction that the offender should be sternly taken to task (see Introduction). No answer had been vouchsafed, but he was informed that so far from being humbled the Corinthians had flouted his behest and, "swollen with windy conceit," were busy debating the rival merits of their teachers; and apparently the culprit was among the loudest in the idle controversy on the side of the intellectuals.

And now the Apostle reiterates his mandate as conveyed to them in his previous letter. Confident then of their loyalty, he had half playfully cast it in the form of a minute registering the court's procedure and its judgment. "For I, absent in the body but present in the spirit, have already passed judgment, as though present, on him who thus wrought this thing: 'In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (the court's authority, just as our law-courts are "fenced" in the King's name): assembled (the sederunt) you and my spirit with the power of the Lord Jesus (cf. Lk. v. 17): deliver such a man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved on the Day of the Lord (the finding).'"

Observe what the finding signifies. The phrase "deliver to Satan" (cf. 1 Tim. i. 20) is the converse of "baptise into Christ" (cf. Rom. vi. 3; Gal. iii. 27); and even as one "baptised into Christ" is thereby recognised as "in Christ," so one "delivered to Satan" is thereby pronounced "in the Evil One" (cf. 1 Jo. v. 19). And the offender, impenitent and arrogant, was thus publicly and authoritatively relegated to his proper standing, that hereby realising his actual condition he might be stirred to repentance. This and not the miraculous infliction of a physical chastisement, perhaps even death (cf. Ac. v. 1-11), is all that "the destruction of the flesh" denotes. For in scriptural language "the flesh" signifies not the body simply but the body corrupted by sinful passions; and the destruction of the flesh is the deliverance of the body from their unhallowed dominion, that the Spirit may reign in it. And thus the finding was a sentence of excommunication. The sinner was to be excluded from the Church's fellowship until, humbled and penitent, he should be counted worthy of readmission.

Though the Corinthians made so light of it, it was a perilous situation, demanding a sharp remedy; for sin harboured without rebuke in their midst would poison the whole community, even as, says the Apostle, quoting a common proverb (cf. Gal. v. 9), "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (cf. Mt. xiii. 33). And the proverb suggests an apposite exhortation, which incidentally fixes the date of the epistle. It was near the Feast of Passover, which fell that year (55 A.D.) on March 30; and even as the ancient Law required that there should be no leaven in a Jewish house during "the days of unleavened bread," so at the sacred season which commemorated the slaying of Christ, their Paschal Lamb, should the Christians purge their hearts of "the leaven of malice and wickedness."

His mandate in his first letter had been that they should not "company with fornicators"; and though the letter had gone unanswered, he had learned that they were pronouncing it an impossible requirement, since so long as they continued in the world, they must rub shoulders with all sorts. It was a frivolous perversion, and here he reproves it. His reference was not to common and necessary intercourse but to Christian communion.

“ I wrote unto you in (not “ an ” but) the epistle not to company with fornicators. And now I write (cf. iv. 17) unto you not to company with any one bearing the name of ‘ brother ’ who is a fornicator. ‘ Put away the wicked man from the midst of you ’ (cf. Dt. xii. 5, xvii. 7, xxii. 24).”

3. LITIGATION

vi

1 *Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints ?*

2 *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world ? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters ?*

3 *Know ye not that we shall judge angels ? how much more things that pertain to this life ?*

4 *If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.*

5 *I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you ? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren ?*

6 *But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.*

7 *Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong ? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded ?*

8 *Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.*

9 *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God ? Be not deceived : neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,*

10 *Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

11 *And such were some of you : but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

12 *All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not *expedient : all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*

* Or, profitable.

13 *Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats : but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord ; and the Lord for the body.*

14 *And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.*

15 *Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot ? God forbid.*

16 *What ? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body ? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.*

17 *But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*

18 *Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body ; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.*

19 *What ? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own ?*

20 *For ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

IT was an unhappy consequence of the contention so rife among the Corinthians that it begat bitter enmities. Hot words were spoken ; and after the wonted manner of "action-taking knaves," as Shakespeare has it, the quarrels were dragged into the law-courts, disgracing the Church in the eyes of the heathen populace. Here the Apostle reproves the scandal.

(1) It was inexcusable inasmuch as the primitive Church, modelled on the Jewish Synagogue, had its own courts for the settlement of disputes. Why then should Christians appeal to heathen tribunals ? It was a frequent promise in the apocalyptic books of the later Jews, written for their encouragement in times of persecution, that on the great Day of Reckoning God's faithful witnesses would serve as His assessors in the judgment of men and angels. "Judgment shall be given to the saints of the Most High" (Dan. vii. 22 ; cf. Mt. xix. 28 ; Lk. xxii. 30 ; Rev. iii. 21, xx. 4). And here the Apostle playfully employs it for the

reproof of the litigious Corinthians. "Know ye not that we shall judge angels, let alone secular affairs?"

(2) "Nay rather," he continues, "if ye have secular tribunals, them that are naught accounted in the church—set these on the bench," meaning that petty disputes on secular affairs have no proper place in a Christian community. The questions which concern the Church and should engage her courts, are high spiritual issues; and if secular affairs must needs be canvassed there, they should be relegated to inferior judicatories.

(3) In truth, as our Lord taught (see exposition of Mt. v. 23-26), there should be no secular litigation between Christians. "Ye are absolutely the losers in having lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?" Litigation is always ruinous for winner and loser alike; and, as Charles Dickens sadly acknowledged after a successful vindication of his literary rights, "it is better to suffer a great wrong than to have recourse to the much greater wrong of the law." Even from a worldly point of view litigation is a losing game; and what is worldly loss in comparison with the eternal issues? "Know ye not that wrong-doers shall not inherit God's Kingdom?"

"All this some of you used to be; but ye washed yourselves clean, ye were sanctified, ye were accounted righteous in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." This impressive challenge is the close of the passage; for the remainder of the chapter (vers. 12-20), so manifestly alien from the context, is no part of the present epistle. It is a fragment of the previous letter which the Apostle had written to the Corinthians some six months ago (cf. v. 9, 10) and which had hitherto gone unanswered (see Introduction). Like many another letter which he wrote in the course of his busy ministry, it has perished. Doubtless it was omitted from the Church's collection of his epistles not merely because it was hastily penned but because it had a purely local interest, nor would it have been seemly to perpetuate needlessly the shame of the Corinthians after their tardy repentance. And this fragment of it was inserted in order to elucidate the sequel.

Observe the occasion. The Apostle had just got thus far in the writing of this second letter to the Corinthians when to his exceeding pleasure three deputies of the erring church—Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus—arrived at Ephesus (cf. xvi. 17, 18). They came in response to his previous communication, so long neglected; and they brought with them an official letter, formulating a series of questions which that communication had raised in their community and craving his judgment thereon. There was one particular passage of his letter which was hotly canvassed; and it is inserted here to elucidate the *motif* of his ensuing discussion of the various questions.

The passage has to do with the unhappy moral issue which had occasioned the Apostle's interference; and the reason why the foul scandal was so lightly treated, at all events by the intellectuals of the Corinthian church, was that their minds were dominated by the philosophic postulate of the essential evil of matter. It is curious that two diverse and antagonistic conclusions were deduced from this initial principle. One was that, since matter is evil, a spiritual man must abjure it; and the result was the asceticism so prevalent among the Jewish Christians (see exposition of Rom. xiv). The other, more congenial to the Gentile mind, was that, since matter and spirit are distinct domains, the former is alien from the spiritual man. The lusts of the flesh are for him "things indifferent," and he may indulge them as he pleases. This argument was a charter of moral libertinism (cf. exposition of Rom. vi. 15-23).

See how the Apostle deals with it here, quoting several maxims of the libertine intellectuals and countering each. " ' Everything is allowable for me ' : yes, but it is not everything that is profitable. ' Everything is allowable for me ' : yes, but I will not allow anything to master me. ' Foods for the belly, and the belly for foods : God will do away with both it and them. ' The body, however, is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. " Libertinism and asceticism are alike unchristian; for the body is sacred and honourable, and that, as the Apostle here and elsewhere affirms, for four reasons. (1) It is God's creature no less than the soul, and He requires

the consecration of the whole man, body and soul alike. (2) In the days of His flesh our Lord wore a body like ours, for ever hallowing our common humanity, even as, reasons St. Athanasius, when a mighty king visits a city, though he occupy but a single house therein, the whole city is honoured. (3) The Holy Spirit makes our bodies—not “His temples” but—“His sanctuaries” (cf. iii. 16). And (4), though mortal, they are imperishable. They will be raised incorruptible and share the soul’s immortality.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED
BY THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

vii-xvi

I. SEXUAL RELATIONS (vii)

(I) MARRIAGE

vii. I-24

1 *Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me : It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*

2 *Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.*

3 *Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence : and likewise also the wife unto the husband.*

4 *The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband : and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.*

5 *Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer ; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*

6 *But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.*

7 *For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.*

8 *I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.*

9 *But if they cannot contain, let them marry : for it is better to marry than to burn.*

10 *And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband :*

11 *But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband : and let not the husband put away his wife.*

12 *But to the rest speak I, not the Lord : If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.*

13 *And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.*

14 *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband : else were your children unclean ; but now are they holy.*

15 *But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases : but God hath called us *to peace.*

16 *For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband ? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife ?*

17 *But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.*

18 *Is any man called being circumcised ? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision ? let him not be circumcised.*

19 *Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.*

20 *Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.*

21 *Art thou called being a servant ? care not for it : but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.*

22 *For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's †freeman : likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.*

23 *Ye are bought with a price ; be not ye the servants of men.*

24 *Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.*

“**R**EGARDING the things which ye write of,” says the Apostle, introducing the series of questions submitted to him. The first of these, arising out of the scandal which had occasioned all the trouble (cf. v. 1), had to do with marriage ; and he begins with the contention of the ascetic party who, without condemning marriage outright, regarded celibacy as the more honourable estate.

* Gr. *in peace.*

† Gr. *made free.*

In his handling of the question he hardly conceals his indignant scorn of the sordid situation which had occasioned it and which precluded the consideration of high ideals. Marriage "was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication"; and the remedy was sorely needed at Corinth. And so he pronounces his verdict: "Since fornication is so frequent, let each man have his own wife, and each woman her proper husband. This I say," he adds, "by way of concession, not of injunction." And that the concession should be so needful was deplorable, especially in the case of "widowers"—so "unmarried men" (ver. 8) here signifies—"and widows." It is in this sense that Paul was himself "unmarried"; for, despite the idea of later days when celibacy was glorified that, as Chaucer has it, "th' apostel was a mayde," it appears that he had been married in his youth, inasmuch as ere his conversion he was a member of the Sanhedrin (cf. Ac. xxvi. 10) and only married men were eligible for that high office. He had once been married, but he was now a widower; and hence his counsel to widowers and widows: "it is honourable for them if they remain like me." Yet he would not deny them the concession; "for marriage is better than the fever of desire." And what of divorce? Here there was no concession. The prohibition was absolute, since the Lord had already pronounced His decision (cf. Mt. v. 32, where see exposition).

This leads to the question of "mixed marriage" (vers. 12-24), a vexatious problem for Christians in the midst of a heathen community. In his previous letter the Apostle had admonished the Corinthians regarding "unequal yoking with unbelievers" (cf. 2 Cor. vi. 14); and the question had arisen what should be done where a union had been formed when both parties were still heathen, and one had subsequently been converted while the other remained an unbeliever. Since in the language of Scripture idolatry was "whoredom" and our Lord accounted fornication a sufficient reason for divorce, should such a union be dissolved? Only, answers the Apostle, where mutual forbearance is lacking. The peace of the home is the supreme consideration; and so long as this is secure, the union

should be maintained in the hope that the unbelieving partner may be won to the Faith.

The general rule is that in whatsoever condition grace finds us, there should we continue in godly contentment, and there live the life of faith and love. A converted Jew need not undo his circumcision, nor a converted Gentile be circumcised ; rather should both alike strive for the purity which circumcision symbolises. And what though a converted slave be still a slave, if he be " the Lord's freedman," " a slave of Jesus Christ (see exposition of Rom. i. 1) " ? " Where each was called, brethren, there let him remain in God's company." " The Situation that has not its Duty, its Ideal, was never yet occupied by man. Yes here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal : work it out therefrom ; and working, believe, live, be free."

(2) VIRGINITY

vii. 25-40

25 *Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord : yet I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.*

26 *I suppose therefore that this is good for the present *distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.*

27 *Art thou bound unto a wife ? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife ? seek not a wife.*

28 *But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned ; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh : but I spare you.*

29 *But this I say, brethren, the time is short : it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none ;*

30 *And they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ;*

31 *And they that use this world, as not abusing it : for the fashion of this world passeth away.*

32 *But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things † that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord :*

33 *But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.*

34 *There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit : but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.*

35 *And this I speak for your own profit ; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.*

* Or, necessity.

† Gr. of the Lord.

36 *But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not : let them marry.*

37 *Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.*

38 *So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well ; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.*

39 *The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth ; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will ; only in the Lord.*

40 *But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment : and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.*

Celibacy was approved by the ascetic party, and the question had been acutely raised by a particular case (cf. ver.36). His answer is that in the absence of an express "injunction of the Lord" he could only give a "judgment" of his own "as one whose experience of the Lord's mercy entitled him to trust." And what is his judgment? Marriage, as he had already affirmed, was legitimate, being a divine ordinance ; but "in view of the present necessity" the honourable course was for a man to refrain from it. And what does he mean by "the present necessity"? Admonishing the Twelve of the calamity which even then menaced their rebellious people and which befell in the year 70 when Jerusalem perished in blood and fire, "Woe," said our Lord (Mt. xxiv. 19), "unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!" It was indeed a parlous time, pregnant with dread issues. The air was filled with whisperings of direful change not alone for Palestine but for the Empire ; and it was a prudent counsel that men should hold themselves free from worldly entanglements which might multiply their sorrows. And apart from public calamities Christians were called to a high and engrossing service. Warm as were his domestic affections, Michelangelo refrained from marriage because, as he was wont to allege, "art was a sufficiently exacting mistress." And even so the Apostle practised and

counselled a like devotion in a nobler cause, "with a view to seemliness and attendance on the Lord *without distraction*." The phrase occurs in the New Testament but once again—in St. Luke's story of the supper at Bethany, where it is written that the busy housewife Martha was "distracted about much service" (x. 40). So the Apostle would have his disciples be warned by her example, and rather emulate Mary, who "sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word."

And now he takes up the case which had occasioned the question. It is aptly illustrated by an incident in the annals of Egyptian monasticism in the third century. A young Christian would have excused himself from marriage, but at the instance of his kinsfolk he espoused a maiden and, conducting her home, read to her the Apostle's counsel and enlarged upon it. Moved thereby she consented that theirs should be a "spiritual marriage"; and they retired to a hermitage in the Nitrian Desert and all their days lived in spiritual fellowship, preserving their virginity. It is such a case that is here contemplated; and while commending the motive which prompted it, the Apostle recognises the difficulty of the achievement and sanctions its abandonment should it prove unattainable. Read the passage thus: "But if some one (cf. v. 1) thinketh that he is behaving unseemly toward his virgin in case he be over-lusty, and there is no help for it, let him do what he desireth; he is not sinning: let them marry. But one who standeth stedfast in his heart and hath no constraint, but hath authority where his own will is concerned, and hath decided in his own heart to keep his virgin intact, will do honourably. And so, while one who putteth his virgin to the use of marriage doeth honourably, one who refraineth will do better."

The Apostle has written hard things, especially as regards remarriage; and now ere closing the discussion, as though his heart misgave him, he recalls that his advice to widowers and widows (cf. vers. 8, 9) was merely a counsel of perfection and not an absolute requirement. Since he deals here specifically with the question of a widow's remarriage, it would appear that he had an actual case in view. Observe, moreover, that where it is written "if her husband be dead," the original properly

signifies "if the husband be fallen asleep" or "gone to his rest," implying according to the usage of the phrase (cf. Jo. xi. 11, where see exposition) that he had been a believer. It was allowable for her, the Apostle intimates, to marry again—with one restriction: "only in the Lord." It is told of Philip Henry, father of the famous commentator, that when he paid his court to his future wife, Miss Matthews of Worthenbury, Cheshire, her friends objected that he was a stranger and no one knew whence he had come. "True," she replied, "but I know where he is going, and I should like to go with him."

2. THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS (viii–xi. 1)

(1) *THE LIBERAL ATTITUDE*

viii

1 *Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.*

2 *And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.*

3 *But if any man love God, the same is known of him.*

4 *As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.*

5 *For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)*

6 *But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we *in him ; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

7 *Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge : for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol ; and their conscience being weak is defiled.*

8 *But meat commendeth us not to God : for neither, if we eat, †are we the better ; neither, if we eat not, ‡are we the worse.*

9 *But take heed lest by any means this §liberty of your's become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.*

10 *For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be ||emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols ;*

11 *And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died ?*

* Or, for him.

† Or, have we the more.

§ Or, power.

|| Gr. edified.

‡ Or, have we the less.

12 *But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.*

13 *Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.*

HERE we are introduced to an embarrassment which, remote from our own experience, pressed hard upon Christians in a pagan community. Only portions, sometimes but a few hairs, of the victims sacrificed in a heathen temple were consumed on the altar. The remainder of the carcasses after furnishing the tables of the priests supplied the meat-market, and hence arose a difficulty for the more scrupulous sort of believers who dreaded the pollution of idolatry. It was indeed easy for them to guard their own tables by ascertaining the source of the meat which they purchased in the market ; but what if a Christian were invited to the table of a heathen friend or to a public banquet ? Moreover, it was the fashion for a pagan, when good had befallen him, to hold a feast of thanksgiving in the temple of his god, and invite his friends to share it and rejoice with him. Could a Christian attend such a celebration ?

It was a delicate question, affecting the maintenance not merely of social relations but of kindly intercourse ; and it is no wonder that it should have been submitted by the Corinthians to the Apostle's consideration. It was stated from the standpoint of the intellectuals, who had adopted a liberal attitude, disdaining what they deemed the narrowness of their scrupulous brethren ; and here he quotes a series of their arrogant pronouncements and pierces each with a sharp retort.

1. " We are aware that we all have knowledge " they wrote, confident of the sufficiency of their own judgment and oblivious of Socrates' discovery that the beginning of knowledge is the recognition of one's ignorance. And what avails knowledge without love or, as our Version has it, " charity " ? " If such be the capacity and receipt of the mind of man," says Lord Bacon in *The Advancement of Learning*, " it is manifest that there is no danger at all in the proportion or quantity of knowledge, how large soever, lest it should make it swell or out-compass

itself; no, but it is merely the quality of knowledge, which, be it in quantity more or less, if it be taken without the true corrective thereof, hath in it some nature of venom or malignity, and some effects of that venom, which is ventosity or swelling. This corrective spice, the mixture whereof maketh Knowledge so sovereign, is Charity, which the Apostle immediately addeth to the former clause: for so he saith, *Knowledge bloweth up, but Charity buildeth up.*"

2. The popular idea alike of the Jews and of the primitive Christians was that the heathen deities were demons (cf. Dt. xxxii. 17; Ps. cvi. 37; Rev. ix. 20), and to participate in idolatry was to expose oneself to their malign working. Therefore it was that the narrower sort of the Corinthians refused to eat things sacrificed to idols; and here (vers. 4-6) in grandiose phrase the intellectuals protest their disdain of the superstitious notion. All would indeed be well, answers the Apostle, if their enlightened view were universal; but here lay the difficulty and the need of charity. "Your knowledge dwells not in all. There are some who, retaining to this hour the old notion about the idol, eat the food as an idol-sacrifice; and their conscience, being weak, is polluted."

3. "But," argued the intellectuals, "food will not recommend us to God. We are neither the worse off by not eating nor the better off by eating." True, answers the Apostle, on your enlightened view; but there is always a grave danger in inducing one who entertains scruples, however unreasonable, to override these. The danger is that he may carry his complaisance too far, and in setting aside his needless scrupulosity run into ruinous laxity and cast off all restraint.

(2) THE APOSTLE'S EXAMPLE

ix

1 *Am I not an apostle ? am I not free ? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord ? are not ye my work in the Lord ?*

2 *If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you : for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.*

3 *Mine answer to them that do examine me is this,*

4 *Have we not power to eat and to drink ?*

5 *Have we not power to lead about a sister, a *wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas ?*

6 *Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working ?*

7 *Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges ? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof ? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock ?*

8 *Say I these things as a man ? or saith not the law the same also ?*

9 *For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen ?*

10 *Or saith he it altogether for our sakes ? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written : that he that ploweth should plow in hope ; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.*

11 *If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things ?*

12 *If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather ? Nevertheless we have not used this power ; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.*

13 *Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things †live of the things of the temple ? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar ?*

* Or, woman.

† Or, feed.

14 *Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*

15 *But I have used none of these things : neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me : for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.*

16 *For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of : for necessity is laid upon me ; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel !*

17 *For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward : but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.*

18 *What is my reward then ? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.*

19 *For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.*

20 *And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews ; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law ;*

21 *To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.*

22 *To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak : I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

23 *And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.*

24 *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize ? So run, that ye may obtain.*

25 *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown ; but we an incorruptible.*

26 *I therefore so run, not as uncertainly ; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air :*

27 *But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection : lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

THE Apostle's law of Christian charity (viii. 13) raised an objection: What becomes of our Christian liberty if it be thus trammelled by scruples which we do not share? And now he addresses himself to this question, all the more readily that it afforded him an opportunity for dealing with a personal matter—the denial of his apostolic authority by the Judaists, the party of Cephas (cf. i. 12), who, recalling how he had exacted no remuneration from his converts during his sojourn at Corinth, preferring to earn his bread by plying his handicraft (cf. Ac. xviii. 1–3), construed it as a confession that he lacked the authority which the other Apostles exercised by the Lord's ordinance (cf. Mt. x. 10). He indignantly repudiates the ungenerous insinuation, and protests that the Corinthians required no vindication of his apostleship. Not only were they informed how, though he had never known Him in the days of His flesh, he had “seen Jesus our Lord” (cf. xv. 8), Risen and Glorified, and received from His lips his apostolic commission, but they as his converts were themselves “the seal of his apostleship.” “My defence to my critics,” he says (ver. 3), “is just this.”

It seems that the large-hearted Barnabas was likewise aspersed, and it is pleasant to find Paul here associating him with himself in his defence. It shows that the unhappy disagreement which had sundered them five years ago (cf. Ac. xv. 36–39), had left no enmity. Comrades no longer, they had gone their several ways, yet they followed each other with loving sympathy. It was no consciousness of inferiority that moved either him or Barnabas to waive the claim which the other Apostles and “the Lord's brethren” (see exposition of Ac. i. 14) enforced. Their service richly entitled them to maintenance, even as a soldier was entitled to his pay, a husbandman to the fruit of his vineyard, a shepherd to the milk of his flock, or, as the Scriptures require, an ox to its mouthfuls from the sheaves as it treads out the grain on the threshing-floor, and the priest who does the Temple's work to his portion of the Temple's provision. In common equity the Apostle was entitled to maintenance; and in his dwelling thus largely hereon was there not a covert reproof of those boastful Corinthians who had suffered

him to serve them without requital? "I am not writing this," he protests significantly, "that it may be so done in my case; for it is a point of honour for me to die rather than——" Here, according to the authentic text, he breaks off. He was about to say "rather than accept grudging requital"; but that were too harsh, and he continues: "No man will make my boast an empty thing." It was his zeal for the Gospel and for his own honour as its Apostle that made him thus forgo his rights. Wage or no wage, he must preach it; and there was no privilege which he would not surrender, no humiliation which he would not endure, that he might win men to faith.

And here he clinches the argument with a vivid appeal which would go home to the Corinthians. Every fifth year their city was thronged with strangers who travelled thither by land and sea to witness the contests of the Isthmian Games—leaping, running, quoiting, javelin-casting, and wrestling. Not lightly were the prizes won but only by long and resolute discipline. And if the athletes strove thus for a fading chaplet of green leaves, how should we strive for an unfading crown? The counsels of the Apostle regarding the discipline of the body and the denial even of its legitimate indulgence (cf. chap. vii) might seem unreasonable to the Corinthians; but they were inspired by a compelling ambition. "I bruise my body (like a pugilist in training) and enslave it, lest perchance, after acting as herald of the game for others, I should myself fail in the ordeal."

(3) THEORY OF SACRAMENTAL SECURITY

x-xi. I

I Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea ;

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea ;

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat ;

4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink : for they drank of that spiritual Rock that *followed them : and that Rock was Christ.

5 But with many of them God was not well pleased : for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

6 Now these things were †our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them ; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

11 Now all these things happened unto them for ‡ensamples : and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is §common to man : but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted

* Or, went with them.

† Gr. our figures.

‡ Or, types.

§ Or, moderate.

above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

15 I speak as to wise men ; judge ye what I say.

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ?

17 For we being many are one bread, and one body : for we are all partakers of that one bread.

18 Behold Israel after the flesh : are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar ?

19 What say I then ? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing ?

20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God : and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils : ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy ? are we stronger than he ?

23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient : all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

24 Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.

25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake :

26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

27 If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go ; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

28 But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake : for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof :

29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other : for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience ?

30 For if I by *grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks ?

* Or, thanksgiving.

31 *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

32 *Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the *Gentiles, nor to the church of God :*

33 *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*

1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*

IT was not merely as an intolerable interference with their Christian liberty that the Corinthian intellectuals resented the prohibition of meat sacrificed to idols. They regarded it as a denial of the efficacy of the Christian Sacraments. They were Greeks, and their minds were still coloured by their Greek culture, especially the solemn ritual of the ancient Mysteries. The Sacraments were for them the Christian Mysteries. Baptism corresponded to the purifying lustration of the initiate, and the Lord's Supper to the ensuing sacrificial feast. And even as the lustration was "a purification," "a bath of life" whence the initiate emerged a new man, so was Baptism "a laver of regeneration"; and even as the god was in the sacrificial food in "real presence," and the eating thereof was "salvation," since it incorporated him with the votary, so was the Eucharist "a medicine of immortality" since it was "communion of Christ's blood and body" (cf. ver. 16). Thus early this gross idea, which still holds its ground, rooted itself in the Christian Church; and it is well to realise that it is nothing else than a mischievous ingraft of paganism.

The argument of the intellectuals was that "the medicine of immortality" was a sovereign antidote to the poison of idolatry; and the Apostle demonstrates its fallacy by a quaint yet effective line of reasoning, reminiscent of his early training in the Rabbinical method of allegorical interpretation. He recalls the experience of the Israelites in the wilderness. They too had their Sacraments. For what else was it than Baptism after the diverse modes of effusion and immersion when the Shekinah (see exposition of Jo. i. 14), the Cloud of the Lord's Presence, overshadowed them, shedding on them refreshment by day and

* Gr. *Greeks*.

light by night (cf. Ex. xiii. 21, 22, xl. 34-38), and when they passed through the sea, "and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left" (cf. xiv. 21, 22)? And what was it but a Eucharist when they were fed with the manna, "bread from Heaven," and drank of the smitten rock (cf. Ex. xvii. 1-6) which, according to Rabbinical legend, continually followed them with its living stream to the end of their long pilgrimage, prophetic of the Eternal Christ who was with them though they knew it not? Yet was there no magical efficacy in those high Sacraments. They did not charm the people from idolatry, from fornication and its dread penalty, or from the murmuring of unbelief.

"All this," says the Apostle (ver. 11), "happened to them by way of warning; and it was written for the admonition of us to whom the tribute of the ages hath accrued." So the original signifies; and the argument is that surely we, "the heirs of all the ages," are inexcusable if we ignore the lessons of the past. Our sole security lies in steadfast resistance to temptation; and why should we flinch from an ordeal which is "the common lot of man"? "If," said brave Adam Bede, "we're men, and have men's feelings, I reckon we must have men's troubles." And is not the ordeal appointed by God? "It is the custom," wrote the Spanish mystic, Diego de Estella, "of those who are appointed to be judges in single combats to measure the weapons of those who are to fight together in the lists. So God, who is the righteous Judge, doth take just measure of our spiritual weapons, and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear."

The best resistance of temptation is prudent avoidance of it; and thus there was reason in that scrupulous abstinence from meat sacrificed to idols which the intellectuals disdained. "I am speaking as to prudent men," says the Apostle; and he quotes from their letter a somewhat rhetorical passage where they had stated their sacramental theory (vers. 16, 17): "The Cup of Blessing which we bless—is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break—is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we, many as we be, are one body; for we all have a share of the one

bread." That was the oldworld idea of sacrifice, still prevailing among the Israelites in the early stage of their religious development. It was a meal which the worshippers shared with their deity and which established a common life between Him and them (cf. Gen. vii. 20, 21; Lev. iii. 11, xxi. 8, 17). And if this held true of the Eucharist, as the intellectuals alleged, then it was no less valid in the eating of meat sacrificed to idols.

Here, however, the intellectuals would raise a protest, reminding the Apostle how they had already insisted that "an idol is nothing in the world" (cf. viii. 4); and if an idol were merely a superstitious imagination, there was no harm in eating meat sacrificed to idols. True, he answers; but though it be an idle fancy that the pagan gods and goddesses are devils, idolatry is still a devilish thing. We may recognise that Venus and Bacchus are fictions of superstition, yet lust and drunkenness are dread realities, and by trafficking with idolatry we expose ourselves to their vile infection and the inevitable doom thereof. And even if it be safe for us, enlightened as we are, charity demands of us consideration for our weaker fellows. "Let none seek his own interest—rather, his neighbour's."

And so, to make the duty plain, the Apostle takes a specific case. "Everything that is sold in the market eat, examining nothing in deference to conscience," that is, your own conscientious conviction that nothing is unclean since, as the Psalmist has it (xxiv. 1), "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof" (in ver. 28 the reiterated quotation is a scribal interpolation, absent from the best manuscripts). Where no question arises, you are free to act upon your own conviction. But suppose you are the guest of a heathen friend, and someone—probably, as St. Chrysostom thought, a heathen fellow-guest—whether mischievously or in the way of kindly warning points to a dish and whispers to you that it is the flesh of a victim "sacrificed" not, as a Christian would have put it, "unto idols" but "in a temple": then abstain from it. And why? "In deference to that person, your informant, and to conscience"—not, explains the Apostle parenthetically, your own conscience, since it is clear in the matter, but your neighbour's. The latter, whatever his motive in warning you, thinks meat

sacrificed at a heathen altar taboo for a Christian ; and should you eat it despite his warning, he will judge you false to your principles, not understanding your position. Thus you will forfeit his respect, and he will spread an evil report of you, to the shame of the cause which you profess. " What is the use," asks the Apostle, " of my liberty being judged by another conscience ? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I calumniated for a thing which I give thanks for. Put no difficulty in the way of Jews, Greeks, or the Church of God."

3. ABUSES IN PUBLIC WORSHIP (xi. 2-34)

(1) THE POSITION OF WOMEN

xi. 2-16

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the *ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ ; and the head of the woman is the man ; and the head of Christ is God.

4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head : for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn : but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God : but the woman is the glory of the man.

8 For the man is not of the woman ; but the woman of the man.

9 Neither was the man created for the woman ; but the woman for the man.

10 For this cause ought the woman to have †power on her head because of the angels.

11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman ; but all things of God.

* Or, traditions.

† That is, a covering, in sign that she is under the power of her husband.

13 *Judge in yourselves : is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered ?*

14 *Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him ?*

15 *But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her : for her hair is given her for a *covering.*

16 *But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.*

SEE how the question had arisen. It was an ancient custom among both Jews (cf. Gen. xxiv. 65) and Greeks that when a modest woman appeared in public, she should wear a veil ; but in the Apostle's declaration that all racial distinctions and class privileges were done away in Christ and Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female were one in Him (cf. Gal. iii. 28), some of the Corinthian women had recognised the charter of their emancipation and asserted their right to discard the veil and pray and preach in the public assemblies. Hence scandal had arisen. A veil was in those days the mark of a modest woman and, especially in a community notorious for licentiousness, no modest woman would have laid it aside. The wearing of it was a decent custom ; and, as Gibbon observes, " the disregard of custom and decency always betrays a weak and ill-regulated mind."

Thus, whatever the abstract merits of the question, that Corinthian innovation was gravely reprehensible ; and we miss the force of the Apostle's reply unless we catch the tone of impatience, almost scorn, which pervades it. Look, for instance, at that stinging sentence (ver. 5) where, referring to an ancient custom which punished an adulteress by shaving her head, he pronounces an unveiled woman " one and the same thing as if she were shaven." The initial and fatal mistake of those aggressive women was their supposition that because all are " one in Christ," there is therefore no distinction or differentiation. Look where you may, he argues, you find in the constitution of the universe order, correlation, and subordination.

* Or, *veil*.

“ Order is Heaven’s first law ” ; and the highest example is the Christian revelation of the Godhead as a trinity in unity. God the Father is supreme, the Head of all. He is the Head of Christ, the Eternal Son, who even as He was obedient to the Father in the days of His flesh, doing always the things that pleased Him, is subject to Him evermore in the unity of the Godhead (cf. xv. 27, 28). And forasmuch as humanity was created after the divine image, here too a corresponding order prevails. As God is the Head of Christ, so is Christ the Head of man ; and as Christ is the Head of man, so is man the head of woman. And as Christ is subject to the Father, so should woman be to man (cf. Eph. v. 23, 24). It is not a question of superiority and inferiority ; it is a question of relation. Woman is subject to man as Christ is to the Father ; and He and the Father are one.

Now see how the Apostle applies this principle to the question of the veil. The Christian fashion was that men should worship with uncovered heads in token of their privilege of “ drawing near with boldness unto the Throne of Grace ” (cf. Heb. iv. 16 ; Ex. xxxiv. 33–35) through Christ their Head ; and had they covered their heads, they would have dishonoured Him by refusing the privilege which He had made theirs. And even as an uncovered head betokened a man’s standing before God in Christ his Head, so a woman’s veil betokened her subjection to her head, and by disusing it she dishonoured him, and in dishonouring him dishonoured herself by departing from her proper degree. It was a shame to her. “ For this cause,” says the Apostle (ver. 10), “ ought the woman to have a symbol of subjection on her head ”—that is, a veil, symbolising her place in the divine order—“ in deference to the angels,” those holy presences which continually compass us unseen (cf. iv. 9 ; 1 Tim. v. 21 ; Heb. xii. 22). So reasoned an old Chinese scholar : “ The spirits of heaven and earth encircle us on every side ; how then could one think of sinning in their presence ? ”

Of course it is a playful argument, befitting the occasion ; and what the Apostle insists upon is not the literal veil but rather (1) the womanly modesty which it symbolises and (2) the proper vocation of woman in the providential order. And when one thinks how beautiful and precious this is, one marvels that

she should ever desire another. When she does, she violates the law of her nature, and she has her reward. "See," says good old Samuel Richardson, "what women get by going out of character. Like the bats in the fable, they are looked upon as mortals of a doubtful species, hardly owned by either, and laughed at by both." And, says George Eliot, "it is a small matter to have our palaces set aflame compared with the misery of having our sense of a noble womanhood, which is the inspiration of a purifying shame, the promise of life-penetrating affection, stained and blotted out by images of repulsiveness."

(2) THE LOVE-FEAST

xi. 17-34

17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be *divisions among you ; and I partly believe it.

19 For there must be also †heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

20 When ye come together therefore into one place, ‡this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper : and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

22 What ? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in ? or despise ye the church of God, and shame §them that have not ? What shall I say to you ? shall I praise you in this ? I praise you not.

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread :

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take eat : this is my body, which is broken for you : this do ||in remembrance of me.

25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood : this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ¶ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

* Or, schisms.

§ Or, them that are poor ?

† Or, sects.

|| Or, for a remembrance.

‡ Or, ye cannot eat.

¶ Or, shew ye,

28 *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

29 *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh *damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*

30 *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

31 *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*

32 *But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*

33 *Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.*

34 *And if any man hunger, let him eat at home ; that ye come not together unto †condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

THE Love-feast or, as our Version has it (Jude 12 ; cf. 2 Pet. ii. 13 R.V.), Feast of Charity was a creation of the "enthusiasm of humanity" which at the outset of the Gospel's career had inspired that generous but, as it proved, disastrous experiment in social reorganisation at Jerusalem (cf. Ac. iv. 32-v. 15). The experiment was short-lived, but, as St. Chrysostom puts it, the Love-feast was "a sort of effluence of that communion which descended to the men of after days. Forasmuch as it befell that some were poor and others rich, they did not indeed pool their possessions, but they instituted common tables on days appointed, and after celebrating the Communion they all proceeded to a common banquet, the rich bringing the provisions, and the poor who had none being invited thereto, and all feasting in common."

It was indeed a gracious usage, but "afterwards," says St. Chrysostom, "it was corrupted." And the reason was that it attracted into the Church's fellowship a horde of greedy idlers. The rich who contributed the provisions rightly resented the impudent imposture, and here the Apostle depicts the ensuing scandal. The institution, designed to weld the believers in sympathetic brotherhood, rather alienated them by creating

* Or, judgment.

† Or, judgment.

“divisions” and (not “heresies” but) “parties” among them. The rich made common cause; and the greedy “sorners” snatched what they could, while the deserving poor, the aged and feeble, were thrust aside. And thus “one was hungry, while another was drunken.”

The gravest aspect of the scandal was its desecration of the Holy Communion. The Love-feast was not indeed a mere celebration of the Lord's Supper. It was a common meal; but, like every common meal in early days, it was consecrated by “the breaking of bread” (cf. Ac. ii. 46)—a godly usage which survives in the Christian custom of “grace before meat.” The scandal would have been impossible had the Corinthians profited by that initial rite and realised their brotherhood in the Lord. It had become a mere form with them; and how could the Apostle more effectively reprove them than by recalling to them the sacred tradition of the Institution in the Upper Room? In those early days, when as yet there was no written Gospel, the record of our Lord's earthly ministry was an oral tradition, derived from the men “which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word”; and the tradition which he had thus “received from the Lord,” he had “delivered” to the Corinthians as to the rest of his converts. And here he repeats it (vers. 23–25; cf. Lk. xxii. 19–20), and points out the significance of the moving ordinance: “Every time ye eat this bread and drink this cup, it is the Lord's death that ye are proclaiming until He come.”

And what is “eating and drinking worthily”? The Apostle defines it as “discerning the Lord's body.” And “one who eateth and drinketh bringeth (not “damnation”—a word which, by reason of the alien associations which have gathered round it, should be banished from the pages of the New Testament and from Christian parlance—but) a judgment on himself, if he doth not discern the Body”; that is, if he eat as of common food, oblivious of the spiritual appeal. Had the Corinthians “discerned the Lord's body,” eating and drinking “in remembrance of Him,” then the thought of His Infinite Compassion would have softened their hearts; and when they proceeded to the Love-feast, they would have—not “tarried for” (ver. 33)

but—"received one another," as the word here signifies, like gracious and kindly hosts. That was the very idea of the Love-feast ; for another of its names was "the Reception."

By reason, probably, of its situation on the Isthmus the climate of Corinth was somewhat trying. So the Proconsul Gallio had found it when, as his brother Seneca tells (*Epist. civ*), he suffered there from fever ; and it seems that at this juncture the city had been visited by an epidemic. "Many among you," says the Apostle, "are weak and sick, and not a few are falling asleep (cf. vii. 39)"—a coincidence which impressively reinforced his admonition (ver. 29). Surely it became them to lay the dispensation to heart and learn the lesson. In truth it had a gracious purpose. "In suffering the judgment it is chastisement at the Lord's hand that we are undergoing, that we may not share the world's condemnation" (ver. 32).

4. SPIRITUAL GIFTS (xii-xiv)

(I) *THEIR DIVERSITY*

xii. 1-30

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus *accursed : and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of †administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit ;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit ; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ;

10 To another the working of miracles ; to another prophecy ; to another discerning of spirits ; to another divers kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues :

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body : so also is Christ.

* Or, anathema.

† Or, ministeries.

13 *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or *Gentiles, whether we be bond or free ; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

14 *For the body is not one member, but many.*

15 *If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body ; is it therefore not of the body ?*

16 *And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body ; is it therefore not of the body ?*

17 *If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing ? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling ?*

18 *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

19 *And if they were all one member, where were the body ?*

20 *But now are they many members, yet but one body.*

21 *And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee : nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*

22 *Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary :*

23 *And these members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we †bestow more abundant honour ; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.*

24 *For our comely parts have no need : but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked :*

25 *That there should be no ‡schism in the body ; but that the members should have the same care one for another.*

26 *And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*

27 *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

28 *And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, §diversities of tongues.*

29 *Are all apostles ? are all prophets ? are all teachers ? are all ||workers of miracles ?*

30 *Have all the gifts of healing ? do all speak with tongues ? do all interpret ?*

* Gr. *Greeks.*

† Or, *put on.*

‡ Or, *division.*

§ Or, *kinds.*

|| Or, *powers.*

IN ancient parlance "a spiritual man" was not merely one dowered with spiritual instinct and understanding but one possessed by an alien spirit which had entered into him, controlling his faculties and speaking through his lips. He was himself no longer. He was "beside himself," and in a sacred frenzy "said," as Socrates put it, "many fine things, but knew none of the things which he said." Hence the Greek word for "a soothsayer" signified properly "a madman." Since there were diverse kinds of spirit, it was needful to ascertain what manner of spirit it was that possessed a man. "Beloved," says St. John (1 Jo. iv. 1), "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." And here St. Paul furnishes a decisive test. A truly spiritual man is one possessed by the Holy Spirit; and since the Holy Spirit's office is to glorify our Lord (cf. Jo. xvi. 14), "no one talking in God's Spirit saith 'Jesus is accursed' (the formula of abjuration—Latin *maledicere Christo*), and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' unless in the Holy Spirit." "Take the oath," said the Proconsul to the aged Polycarp of Smyrna, "and I release thee. Revile the Christ." "Eighty and six years," was the answer, "have I been His slave, and He hath done me no wrong, and how can I blaspheme my King, my Saviour?"

"If a man," says Charles Dickens, "would commit an inexpressible offence against any society, large or small, let him be successful"; and even in apostolic days the Christian communities were vexed by the spirit of envy, "that dark shadow," in Thomas Fuller's phrase, "ever waiting on shining merit." The reason was the "diversity of gifts" and the degrees of prestige accruing to their possessors (cf. Rom. xii. 3-8); and nowhere was the evil more rife than in the Corinthian Church, so rich in varied intellectual endowment. Here the Apostle deals with it; and first (vers. 4-11) he reminds his readers that the diverse "gifts" which abounded among them were all alike sacred. The very word which he employs points the lesson; for it signifies properly "gifts of grace," recalling how it was written of old (Ex. xxxi. 1-6) that for the making of the Tabernacle in the wilderness the Lord called Bezaleel and his fellow artificers and "filled them with the Spirit of God, to work in gold, and in

silver, and in cutting of stones, and in carving of timber." Smiths, masons, and carpenters, they all were called of God and inspired by His Spirit.

From Thee all skill and science flow ;
All pity, care, and love,
All calm and courage, faith and hope,
Oh ! pour them from above.

And part them, Lord, to each and all,
As each and all shall need,
To rise like incense, each to Thee,
In noble thought and deed.

And not only are all the diverse gifts of grace sacred but they are all needed (vers. 12-30). This truth the Apostle enforces by that ancient fable of the body and its members (see exposition of Rom. xii. 3-8). It was of old a political parable, likening the state to the body, whose weal depends on the health of its various members and the performance by each, even the humblest, of its appropriate function ; but he gives it a nobler application. It is the Church that he has in view, and he defines it as " the Body of Christ "—a perpetuation of His Incarnation. Even as in the days of His flesh He wore a human body, so now is He incarnate in the community of believers ; and each believer is a member of Christ with his peculiar function, most needful however lowly.

(2) *THE SUPREMACY OF LOVE*

xii. 31-xiii

31 *But covet earnestly the best gifts : and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.*

1 *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.*

2 *And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.*

3 *And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

4 *Charity suffereth long, and is kind ; charity envieth not ; charity *vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,*

5 *Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil ;*

6 *Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth †in the truth ;*

7 *Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

8 *Charity never faileth : but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.*

9 *For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.*

10 *But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*

11 *When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I ‡thought as a child : but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*

* Or, is not rash.

† Or, with the truth.

‡ Or, reasoned.

12 *For now we see through a glass *darkly ; but then face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

13 *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity.*

IN counselling godly contentment with the gifts, howsoever lowly, wherewith God has endowed us, the Apostle in no wise censures the ambition of improving these that we may the better glorify our Lord. On the contrary, this is a sacred duty ; and he now shows how so laudable an end may be achieved. Promotion comes not by ambitious discontent but by loyal acceptance of God's appointments—a lesson which Dr. Thomas Guthrie, the famed preacher and philanthropist of last century, enforced by a personal reminiscence. He began his ministry in a quiet parish in Forfarshire ; and in a neighbouring parish was settled a young minister of excellent abilities and lofty ambitions, who reckoned himself suited for a larger sphere. Years passed, yet the expected promotion still tarried. " Five and twenty years ago," said Guthrie, " he was always keek-keekin' (peep-peeping) over the hills for a deputation from Edinburgh or Glasgow, and he's keekin' to this day." It is right to desire a larger service, but the secret of attaining thereto lies in faithfulness to the lowly tasks entrusted to us. " Strive zealously," says the Apostle, " for the greater gifts of grace ; and furthermore I point out to you a sovereign way." And the Sovereign Way is " Charity," which is Latin for " Love."

What is it that constitutes the supremacy of Love ? 1. It is the soul of every other gift of grace, and without it every other is worthless (vers. 1-3). Take eloquence : It was said of old that when the Romans heard Cicero, so ornate and musical, they exclaimed " He speaks like a god ! " but when the Athenians heard the impassioned appeals of Demosthenes, they forget the orator and shouted " Let us march against Philip ! " Take preaching or, in New Testament phrase, " prophecy " (cf. Ac. xi. 27) : A young priest asked Juan de Avila, " the Apostle of Andalusia," how he might learn to preach with power. " There

* Gr. in a riddle.

is no other way," was the answer, " but by ardent love of God." Faith again is a steadfast resolution, and this will achieve impossibilities : according to the ancient proverb (cf. Mt. xvii. 20) it will " remove mountains " ; but love alone will move the heart. It is told in the Talmud how three Gentiles once waited first on the stern Rabbi Shammai and then on the gentle Hillel ; and, conferring afterwards, " The sternness of Shammai," said they, " would have driven us from the world ; the gentleness of Hillel brought us nigh beneath the wings of the Shekinah (see exposition of Jo. i. 14)." And what is charity, in the narrow sense of the word, without love ? One may " dole out all his possessions," yet " the gift without the giver is bare." And where love is lacking, even martyrdom is but obduracy or vain-glory. " For faith, everywhere multitudes die willingly enough," said Richard Steele in *Esmond*. " I have read in Monsieur Rycaut's ' History of the Turks,' of thousands of Mahomet's followers rushing upon death in battle as upon certain Paradise ; and in the Great Mogul's dominions people fling themselves by hundreds under the cars of the idols annually, and the widows burn themselves on their husbands' bodies, as 'tis well known. 'Tis not the dying for a faith that's so hard—every man of every nation has done that—'tis the living up to it that is difficult."

2. Love is supreme by reason of her own excellences (vers. 4-7). " Love is long-suffering, kind is Love ; there is no jealousy in Love, no vaunting, no windy pride, no unseemly behaviour ; she never seeketh her own, is never irritated"—perhaps a regretful recollection of the " irritation " which had sundered the Apostle and Barnabas (cf. Ac. xv. 39, where see exposition),—" never ' reckoneth her ill ' (Zech. viii. 17, Gr. Vers.) ; she rejoiceth not over unrighteousness but rejoiceth with the truth ; she always keepeth counsel, is always faithful, always hopeful, always patient."

" I believe," writes an English novelist, " that love is the secret of the world : it is like the philosopher's stone they used to look for, and almost as hard to find, but if you find it, it turns everything to gold. Perhaps when the angels departed from the earth, they left us love behind, that by it and through it we may climb up to them again."

3. Love alone endures (vers. 8-13). "Prophecies shall"—not "fail" but—"be done away; tongues shall cease; knowledge shall be done away." For preaching and eloquence are for the winning of the world to faith, and when the world is won, they will be no longer needed; and with the increase of knowledge the wisdom of one generation is folly to the next.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be.

"One thing contained in heavenly rest," says Richard Baxter, "is the ceasing from means of grace. When we have obtained the haven, we have done sailing. When the workman receives his wages, it is implied he has done his work. When we are at our journey's end, we have done with the way. There shall be no more prayer, because no more necessity, but the full enjoyment of what we prayed for: neither shall we need to fast and weep, and watch any more; being out of the reach of sin and temptations. Preaching is done; the ministry of man ceaseth; sacraments become useless; the labourers are called in, because the harvest is gathered." All other gifts of grace are temporal, but love is eternal.

For all we know
Of what the blessed do above,
Is, that they praise, and that they love.

All other gifts of grace are summed up in Faith and Hope—the grasping of the unseen and the looking forward to its realisation; and it is no disparagement of these that they must pass away. For the present they are exceeding precious and most needful; and the Apostle shows the reason in a sentence whereof the profound significance is but poorly expressed by our Version (ver. 12). "For we see meanwhile," it runs quite literally, "by means of a mirror in a riddle." And the thought is that in this imperfect state it is not eternal things themselves that we see, but merely their reflection, as Lord Bacon has it, in "the unequal mirror of our own minds." "For," he continues, "the mind of man is far from the nature of a clear and equal glass,

wherein the beams of things should reflect according to their true incidence ; nay, it is rather like an enchanted glass, full of superstition and imposture, if it be not delivered and reduced.” And even so says the Apostle : “ We look meanwhile in a mirror, guessing at what we see, but then—face to face ; meanwhile it is but partially that I can know, but then shall I know as fully as I am known.”

(3) SPEAKING WITH TONGUES

xiv

I Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God : for no man *understandeth him ; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself ; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied : for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine ?

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the †sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped ?

8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle ?

9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words ‡easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken ? for ye shall speak into the air.

10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.

11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.

* Gr. *heareth*.

† Or, *tunes*.

‡ Gr. *significant*.

12 *Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous *of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.*

13 *Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.*

14 *For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.*

15 *What is it then ? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also : I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.*

16 *Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest ?*

17 *For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.*

18 *I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all :*

19 *Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousands words in an unknown tongue.*

20 *Brethren, be not children in understanding : howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be †men.*

21 *In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people ; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.*

22 *Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not : but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.*

23 *If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad ?*

24 *But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all :*

25 *And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest ; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.*

26 *How is it then, brethren ? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.*

* Gr. of spirits.

† Gr. perfect, or of a ripe age.

27 *If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course ; and let one interpret.*

28 *But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church ; and let him speak to himself, and to God.*

29 *Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.*

30 *If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.*

31 *For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.*

32 *And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.*

33 *For God is not the author of *confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.*

34 *Let your women keep silence in the churches : for it is not permitted unto them to speak ; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.*

35 *And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home : for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.*

36 *What ? came the word of God out from you ? or came it unto you only ?*

37 *If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.*

38 *But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.*

39 *Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.*

40 *Let all things be done decently and in order.*

“**S**PEAKING with tongues,” that gift of grace which accompanied the Holy Spirit’s advent on the Day of Pentecost (cf. Ac. ii. 1-13, where see exposition), was not a miraculous endowment with the faculty of speaking foreign languages. It was the rapturous outpouring of the grace which had flooded the disciples’ hearts, elevating their minds and ennobling their speech, naturally so rude. It was indeed indistinguishable from “prophecy” in the scriptural sense of the term (cf. Ac. xi. 27), save for the fullness of the

* Gr. *tumult*, or *unquietness*.

new-found grace of the Holy Spirit. It was His visitation of their souls that made the difference.

Understanding this, we understand also the difficulty which the gift of tongues had occasioned at Corinth and which now engages the Apostle's attention. As practised there, speaking with tongues was a pagan corruption of the Pentecostal grace. On the heathen view, a prophet was one possessed by a spirit, whether good or evil, like the Pythian priestess who delivered her responses in a wild frenzy with streaming hair and foaming lips (cf. Ac. xvi. 16, where see exposition); and scandal was inevitable in a community composed largely of heathen converts. Emotional minds were quickly carried away by a tide of spiritual enthusiasm; and their ecstasies were deemed oracular, and though nothing more than "inarticulate groanings" (Rom. viii. 26), mere sobs and cries, they were interpreted as divine communications. Nor was the idea devoid of reason. For speech fails in moments of deep emotion, and, as Darwin observed, there is meaning in "inarticulate cries, aided by gestures and the movements of the muscles of the face." "Our cries of pain, fear, surprise, anger, together with their appropriate actions, and the murmur of a mother to her beloved child, are more expressive than any words."

Hence the scandal which had arisen at Corinth and which was the more grievous to the Apostle forasmuch as it was a perversion of the excellent gift of prophecy, next to love the most to be desired of all the gifts of grace. Observe how he deals with it here. He does not condemn "speaking with tongues"; for this in its legitimate exercise was a precious gift, nothing else than prophecy at its highest, and he could thank God that he knew by blessed experience what it meant (ver. 18; cf. 2 Cor. xii. 1-4). And his present endeavour is simply to recall his deluded converts to its proper use and curb their heathenish excesses. He reminds them that the supreme end is the edification of the Church; and this is attained by simple prophecy, the impassioned proclamation of a divine message, warm from a heart which has felt its power. But when prophecy passes into ecstasy, there is no profit for the hearers, unless an interpretation be supplied. It is for them

mere babbling, like the tuneless sounding of a flute or the twanging of a harp without "distinction in the notes," as profitless as though they were addressed in a strange language. "If I do not know the force of the language, I shall be to the man who is talking it (not "a barbarian" but) a foreigner (cf. Ac. xxviii. 2, where see exposition), and the man who is talking it will be a foreigner with me." Ecstasy may be profitable for the enthusiast himself, but it is unprofitable for his brethren, unless he can afterwards interpret his utterances to them. "Else, if thou bless with spirit only, how shall one who filleth the place of the plain man (cf. Ac. iv. 13, where see exposition) say the Amen at thy thanksgiving?" (ver. 16).

Highly as prophetic ecstasy was esteemed in a Gentile community, it was sheer childishness, and mischievous at that; and here he recalls how of old when the people of Jerusalem sneered at the simplicity of their prophet's preaching, they were warned that they would soon have enough of unintelligible speech when the Assyrian invader appeared in their midst (cf. Is. xxviii. 11, 12). The mischief of those wild excesses was that they exposed the Church to ridicule. If "a plain man" or "a stranger to the Faith" visited the assembly of the brethren, what would he think but that they were mad?

And so the Apostle lays down various practical rules. 1. As regards "talking with a tongue" (vers. 27, 28): he does not prohibit the exercise of the gift, but he imposes two limitations: (1) On no single occasion must more than "two or, at the most, three" exercise it, and they must not speak simultaneously but "each in turn." And (2), since the supreme end was edification, their impassioned utterances must be interpreted; and, failing an interpreter, the enthusiast must keep silence and be content to commune with God.

2. Even prophecy required regulation (vers. 29-33); and that for two reasons: (1) It so easily passed into ecstasy; and (2), mistaking his own fancies for divine revelations, a prophet might be deluded and excite controversy by his pronouncements. The remedy was that not more than two or three should exercise their gift on the same occasion, and their fellow prophets should "judge" or rather "discern." There must be no clamour,

no contention ; “ for God is not a God of disorder but a God of peace.” So was it “ in all the churches of the saints,” and so must it be at Corinth.

3. How came it that the Apostle here introduces the question of the propriety of women speaking in Church (vers. 34-38) ? Plainly the innovation originated with those obtrusive women who claimed the right to pray and prophesy unveiled (cf. xi. 2-16, where see exposition) ; and it was their hysterical raptures in the way of “ speaking with tongues ” that had occasioned the scandal. The innovation was a flagrant violation of the principle which the Apostle has already defined, and in pursuance thereof he absolutely and indignantly prohibits it. “ It is disgraceful for a woman to talk in Church.” And he further pronounces it an audacious defiance of Christian usage. “ Was it from you that the Word of God went forth, or did it reach to you alone ? ” What right had they to override the *consensus fidelium* ? And that consensus, as every true prophet, every truly spiritual person, would recognise, had the Lord’s sanction. For, though there were many devoted women among His disciples, He had elected none of them to the apostleship. That was decisive. It precluded argument. “ If any one ignore it, he is to be ignored ” (ver. 38).

5. THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY (xv)

(1) EVIDENCE OF OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION

xv. 1-19

1 *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand ;*

2 *By which also ye are saved, if ye *keep in memory †what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.*

3 *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures ;*

4 *And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures :*

5 *And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve :*

6 *After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once ; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.*

7 *After that, he was seen of James ; then of all the apostles.*

8 *And last of all he was seen of me also, as of ‡one born out of due time.*

9 *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

10 *But by the grace of God I am what I am : and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain ; but I laboured more abundantly than they all : yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

11 *Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.*

12 *Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead ?*

* Or, hold fast.

† Gr. by what speech.

‡ Or, an abortive.

13 *But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen :*

14 *And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.*

15 *Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God ; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ : whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.*

16 *For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised :*

17 *And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins.*

18 *Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.*

19 *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

IN his previous letter to the Corinthians (cf. vi. 12-20, where see exposition) the Apostle had urged it as a reason for the sanctification of the body that, though mortal, it is imperishable and will be raised again to share the soul's immortality ; and this had excited discussion among them. To some, holding the philosophic doctrine of the evil of matter, it was incredible ; and the question had been referred to his judgment.

He opens his argument with an appeal to the historic fact of the Resurrection of our Lord, which was the foundation of the apostolic faith and had from the beginning been the burthen of the apostolic preaching (cf. Ac. ii. 32, 33) ; and he reminds them of his testimony thereto during his ministry among them. It was a recital of the chief of our Lord's manifestations in the course of the forty days betwixt His Resurrection and His Ascension, comprising, besides those fully recorded by the Evangelists, His manifestation to Cephas (Peter) on the morning of the Resurrection-day (cf. Lk. xxiv. 34 and see exposition of Jo. xx. 19), that to an assemblage of over five hundred of His disciples, most of them still surviving, probably in Galilee (see exposition of Jo. xxi. 19b), and that to James which had won not only him but the rest of " the Lord's brethren " (see exposition of Ac. i. 14). All these were known to St. Paul only by

tradition, but they had been confirmed in his experience by the manifestation afterwards vouchsafed on the road to Damascus to himself "as one born out of due season," literally "me, the abortion." The point is not the lateness of his conversion. For the word denotes a child prematurely born and a weakling all his days; and the Apostle so designates himself in humble contrition. His shame was not that he had been converted late but that he had been a persecutor; and on this score, even while he stoutly asserted his apostleship, magnifying the grace which had stooped so low, he felt and acknowledged his unworthiness. It was the grace of God that had made him what he was.

And now see the argument which the Apostle builds upon the fact of our Lord's Resurrection, so convincingly attested, so undoubtingly accepted. "If it is proclaimed that Christ hath been raised from the dead, how is it," he asks, quoting from the consulting letter, "that some among you are saying that 'there is no such thing as a resurrection of dead men'?" The single fact of His Resurrection refuted the contention. And the fact was certain. The evidence was indisputable, and the consequences of its denial were unthinkable. For then the Apostles and their fellows who testified that they had seen the Risen Lord would stand convicted as false witnesses, and the faith of the Gospel with all its beautiful and blessed hopes would be "whistled down the wind."

Observe what it means that it was possible for the Apostle to reason thus. It was only the resurrection of believers that the Corinthians called in question, and in no wise the Resurrection of our Lord. So surely was this attested in those early days that they had no manner of doubt thereof, insomuch that, just a quarter of a century after the event, the Apostle could appeal to it as an unchallengeable verity.

(2) *THE ISSUES AT STAKE*

XV. 20-34

20 *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.*

21 *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*

22 *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

23 *But every man in his own order : Christ the firstfruits ; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*

24 *Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father ; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.*

25 *For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.*

26 *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*

27 *For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.*

28 *And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

29 *Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all ? why are they then baptized for the dead ?*

30 *And why stand we in jeopardy every hour ?*

31 *I protest by *your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.*

32 *If †after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not ? let us eat and drink ; for to morrow we die.*

* Some read, *our*.

† Or, *to speak after the manner of men*.

33 *Be not deceived : evil communications corrupt good manners.*

34 *Awake to righteousness, and sin not ; for some have not the knowledge of God : I speak this to your shame.*

THE question of the resurrection of the body is indeed momentous. Consider the issues involved.

1. The redemption of the whole creation, the removal of the curse of sin, which "brought death into the world and all our woe" (vers. 20-28). For "as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive." He "hath been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have gone to rest"; and His Resurrection is the pledge not alone of ours in due order but of His triumph over death and the final subjection of the universe to God according to the ancient promise (cf. Ps. cx. 1).

2. The satisfaction of our hearts' fond yearnings (ver. 29). Here is a passage which, though it would be plain to the Apostle's contemporaries who understood his reference, has long been perhaps the most disputed in Holy Scripture. A mere enumeration of its various interpretations would require a dissertation, says that devout and learned commentator of the eighteenth century, Albrecht Bengel, thinking perhaps of his predecessor Matthew Poole whose enumeration thereof in his *Synopsis Criticorum* occupies four closely printed folio pages. Suffice it to mention three which have long been current.

The first regards the Apostle as referring to the usage of "Vicarious Baptism" prevalent in the second century, when Christians, solicitous for the eternal welfare of their friends who had died unbaptised, presented themselves at the sacred font in their name, in the hope that these might on this score be accounted Christians and share the felicity of "resurrection unto life." The rite was practised in the time of Tertullian, but it was not an apostolic institution. It was peculiar to certain heretical sects, and evidently originated in a misapprehension of our passage.

Again, in his exposition of our passage St. Chrysostom first refers to that heretical usage, ridiculing it with a controversialist's

disregard of the tender instinct which prompted it and which surely entitles it, howsoever mistaken, to reverent treatment ; and then he states his own judgment, wherein he perpetrates a fresh anachronism by construing the passage in terms of the contemporary administration of the Sacrament of Baptism. The administrator recited the Creed and the catechumen repeated it after him ; and when they reached the article " I believe in the Resurrection of the Dead," the Sacrament was administered " on the ground of this faith."

Thirdly, it has been supposed that the reference is to " Death-bed Baptism " (*baptisma clinicorum*), an unfortunate custom which arose as early as the close of the second century. Already the pagan notion of " baptismal regeneration " (see exposition of x. 1-11) had infected the Church ; and forasmuch as post-baptismal sin was reckoned a heinous desecration of sacramental grace, entailing a heavy liability not on the sinner alone but on his sponsors, it was thought expedient, as in the cases of St. Augustine and the good Emperor Valentinian II, that parents should withhold the Sacrament from their children and let them go unbaptised until they had passed the perilous period of passionate and inexperienced youth. Its administration was commonly delayed until the near approach of death ; and not a few interpreters, including Calvin and Bengel, have seen here a reference to that usage. But it is " baptism for the dead " that is here in question, not " baptism of the dying " ; and the latter was unknown in the Apostle's day. It was a subsequent innovation.

What then is the meaning of our text ? Observe that in the original " for the dead " is more properly " for the sake of the dead." The Apostle has in view the difficulties which the idea of the resurrection of the body presented to the minds of some of the Corinthians ; and ere entering upon his noble apologetic he is seeking to check their impatience and restrain them from precipitate negation by displaying the issues at stake, the precious hopes which would vanish were it proved that there is no resurrection. Not the least precious is the prospect of reunion with our beloved who " have gone to their rest in Christ," leaving us desolate.

But 'tis an old belief
 That on some solemn shore,
 Beyond the sphere of grief,
 Dear friends shall meet once more,—

Beyond the sphere of time
 And sin and fate's control,
 Serene in endless prime
 Of body and of soul.

And here he points his admonition with a perennially moving appeal—the example, say, of a husband whose dear wife had been a believer and who, while she lived, had disregarded her gracious pleadings. Now she has “gone to her rest in Christ,” and, left alone and desolate, he repents of his obduracy. The Gospel of a joyful resurrection and a blessed reunion conquers his unbelief, and his heart, moved by that hope, turns to the Saviour. Will you, pleads the Apostle, lightly forgo that hope? If there be no resurrection, “what will they do who are baptised for the sake of their dead?”

3. The reasonableness of suffering and martyrdom for the Faith (vers. 30–34). Here the Apostle has in view the libertine corollary of the philosophic doctrine of the essential evil of matter (see exposition of vi. 12–20). Since the body is material, a temporary prison-house of the spirit, it is nothing to the spiritual man, and he is free to indulge its carnal appetites as he will. Were it so, then Epicureanism were the right philosophy of life; and what reason was there in the daily risks which the Christians were running in their testimony for the Gospel and which the Apostle was facing in grim earnest at Ephesus, where he was beset as by a horde of wild beasts (cf. 2 Cor. i. 8–10; Ac. xix. 23–40)? “Daily I am facing death—ay, by that boasting of you, brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The plain fact was that the scepticism of those Corinthians regarding the resurrection of the body was less intellectual than moral. For it came of their trafficking with a licentious pagan philosophy; and their fitting admonition was that line of the Greek poet Menander “Evil communications corrupt good manners.”

(3) THE INTELLECTUAL PROBLEM

xv. 35-58

35 *But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?*

36 *Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:*

37 *And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:*

38 *But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.*

39 *All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.*

40 *There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.*

41 *There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.*

42 *So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:*

43 *It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:*

44 *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

45 *And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*

46 *Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.*

47 *The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.*

48 *As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy : and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.*

49 *And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

50 *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

51 *Behold, I shew you a mystery ; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

52 *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump : for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

53 *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

54 *So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*

55 *O death, where is thy sting ? O *grave, where is thy victory ?*

56 *The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law.*

57 *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

THE problem as it presented itself to the minds of those Corinthian sceptics was twofold :

I. " How are the dead raised up ? " When our mortal bodies are laid in their narrow bed, they do not lie there intact until the resurrection-morning. They decay, they crumble, they are resolved into their original elements ; and should we penetrate a grass-grown mound in God's Acre, we would not find its tenant still reposing " with meek hands folded on his breast." The lifeless form has disappeared. It has disappeared, but it has not perished : it has been transmuted, " melted," as the Egyptian puts it in *Quentin Durward*, " into the general mass of nature, to be recompounded in the other forms with which

* Or, *hell*.

she daily supplies those which daily disappear, and return under different forms—the watery particles to streams and showers, the earthly parts to enrich their mother earth, the airy portions to wanton in the breeze, and those of fire to supply the blaze of Aldebaran and his brethren.”

There's not one atom of yon earth
But once was living man ;
Nor the minutest drop of rain,
That hangeth in its thinnest cloud,
But flowed in human veins.

Then “ how are the dead raised up ? ” Is it possible for the dispersed elements to be regathered and recomposed, merged as they now are in the common store of matter which remains constant, unincreased and undiminished, through all its transformations and adaptations ?

2. Suppose it possible : are these bodies of ours suited for the Eternal Order ? They are material, and what place could they hold in a spiritual domain—that Kingdom which, the Apostle recognises, “ flesh and blood cannot inherit ” ? Shall we go thither, mocked the Pagans in early days, with hair on our heads and nails on our fingers ? and it would be such coarse gibes that were rankling in the mind of that Corinthian Christian when he inquired : If the dead are raised up, “ with what body—what manner of body—do they come ? ”

It was indeed a perplexing problem, and he was no frivolous sceptic who propounded it. He was an earnest man, who would fain believe but found faith difficult ; and surely the Apostle makes a bad beginning when he preludes his argument with a contemptuous and contumelious epithet—“ thou fool ! ” regardless, as it seems, of our Lord's admonition (Mt. v. 22). But in the original the word which he employs is not the cruel epithet which our Lord so sternly reprobated ; and if we catch its idea, we shall recognise how effectively it introduces his argument. What, for exaxple, did Socrates mean when in a famous passage he used it of a statue ? Visit Edinburgh, and as you pass along Princes Street you will see, among the monuments which adorn the noble thoroughfare, a statue to the

memory of Dr. Thomas Guthrie, known as "The Friend of Ragged Children" for his work among the city's waifs; and beneath its shadow, most likely, you will find a little flower-girl, barefoot and tattered, soliciting custom. Picture what would happen were it the living man that is standing there—how his heart would melt, his eyes glisten, the word of compassion leap to his lips, and his kind hand be laid on the little matted head. But it is not the living man: it is only a statue. There it stands; and it has eyes, but they do not see; it has ears, but they do not hear; and there is no warm heart beating in its marble breast. It is only a statue—"a foolish statue," "senseless," "unperceiving," seeing nothing, hearing nothing, feeling nothing of all that is passing around it.

And so the Apostle's meaning appears. He listens to that difficulty regarding the resurrection of the body, and then he turns upon his questioner, not abusively but with kindly sympathy. "Unperceiving man!" he cries; "open your eyes and observe what is passing around you, and you will never ask that question or be troubled by that difficulty any more. For the resurrection of the body, howsoever mysterious, is a familiar operation of the natural order." And see how he makes it good. He points to the continual miracle of the seed and the harvest—truly a transcendent miracle, though custom has dulled our sense of its wonder. Here is the natural law of the resurrection of the body. "Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what manner of body do they come?" "Unperceiving man!" cries the Apostle, "senseless as an inanimate statue! consider the marvels which confront you." Look at the fields—the seed cast into the earth, dying, decaying, and rising again, a rich and glorious harvest. It dies, but it dies that it may live, and live more abundantly (cf. Jo. xii. 24). For death is not merely, in St. Bernard's phrase, "the gate of life" but the pathway to an ampler and nobler life.

But will this suffice? The harvest is no less material than the seed, and will the nobler body which will spring from this mortal body, be less material or fitter to inherit the Kingdom of God? Consider, argues the Apostle, what "body" signifies.

It is in no wise synonymous with "flesh." There are indeed bodies of flesh, different kinds of flesh—human flesh and flesh of beasts and birds and fishes—yet all flesh. And these are all bodies ; but they are not the only kind of body. For there are heavenly bodies as well as earthly, and the heavenly bodies are not bodies of flesh. And neither are they all alike ; "for star differeth from star in glory."

And thus, while "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God," it in no wise follows that "body" cannot ; and it is the resurrection not of the flesh but of the body that is in question. Hence the Apostle carries forward his argument ; and his reasoning in this magnificent passage is no mere devout fancy or philosophic speculation but a prophetic vision which science has of late amazingly illumined and will surely illumine still more. As there is a matter within matter, the "interstellar" or "luminiferous ether" as it is termed in our present ignorance, the medium through which the X-rays and wireless telegraphy operate, so is there a body within the body, known of old as "the ethereal" or, as the Apostle has it, "the spiritual" or "heavenly body." The natural body, the body of flesh and blood, is, as it were, the rough cast of the spiritual body ; and in due season the gross integument, "this muddy vesture of decay," will be sloughed off, and the spiritual body will emerge, "simple and lucid," fit to inherit the Kingdom of God. (See preface to exposition of Jo. xx, xxi, "The Body of His Glory.") Meanwhile our bodies are only in the making. Science has traced their marvellous history—the patient evolution of the rude protoplasm into these complex organs of mind and soul. Even now they are still only in the making ; and the agelong process will at length attain its final goal when "the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory."

And this is the Resurrection of the Body—the ultimate realisation of the Creator's eternal purpose, the "one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves."

6. THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS

xvi

1 *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.*

2 *Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*

3 *And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your *liberality unto Jerusalem.*

4 *And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.*

5 *Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia : for I do pass through Macedonia.*

6 *And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.*

7 *For I will not see you now by the way ; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.*

8 *But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.*

9 *For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.*

10 *Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear : for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do.*

11 *Let no man therefore despise him : but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me : for I look for him with the brethren.*

12 *As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren : but his will was not at all to come at this time ; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.*

13 *Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*

14 *Let all your things be done with charity.*

* Gr. gift.

15 *I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)*

16 *That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.*

17 *I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus : for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.*

18 *For they have refreshed my spirit and your's : therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.*

19 *The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.*

20 *All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.*

21 *The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.*

22 *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha.*

23 *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

24 *My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

THE Apostle had invited the Corinthians to bear their part with his other Gentile churches in supporting the fund which he had organised for the relief of the impoverished Christians at Jerusalem (see exposition of Ac. xi. 27-30, xii. 25) ; and here, in reply to a question thereanent, he counsels them to adopt the method which he had at the outset instituted in southern Galatia. It was that instead of waiting until he paid them his intended visit they should begin immediately, laying by in store each Lord's Day so much of their weekly earning as they could afford. It would thus be less burdensome to them, and they would raise a larger sum. It appears in the sequel (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 17) that a calumny was afoot among the Corinthians that he was finding his account in the administration of the charity, and he tacitly disposes thereof by intimating that he would never handle their contribution. They would themselves elect delegates to convey it to Jerusalem, and he would furnish these with letters of credit. "If, however," he

adds by way of incentive, "it be worth my going, they will go in my company," meaning that if the contribution was a handsome one, he would accompany them to Jerusalem and personally introduce them.

He was eager to visit Corinth and compose the unhappy dissensions (cf. xi. 34), and his intention was to travel thither overland through Macedonia. Observe how the time had passed. It was in February of the year 55 (see exposition of v. 6-8) that the three Corinthian deputies had arrived at Ephesus; and since time was required for conferring with them, and composing his replies to the vexatious questions which they submitted, it would now be the month of June. The Feast of Pentecost, falling that year on May 20, was past, and in view of the requirements of his ministry at Ephesus he must remain there until next Pentecost (May 9, 56). His progress through Macedonia, visiting his churches by the way, would be slow, and it would be autumn ere he could reach Corinth, where he hoped to "make a stay or even spend the winter." That was a remote date, and meanwhile he had despatched thither his attendant Timothy and several Ephesian friends, including Erastus (cf. Ac. xix. 22). Travelling overland through Macedonia, they would arrive after the receipt of this letter which the three deputies would convey direct to Corinth; and he bespeaks of the contentious church a kindly welcome for his young representative. He was anxious for him and his associates and for the report which they would bring. "Send him on his way in peace, that he may come to me; for I am expecting him and the brethren with him."

It was a difficult errand for Timothy, young and inexperienced as he was; and the Apostle would rather have entrusted it to Apollos, that eloquent teacher whose name had served as a battle-cry among the Corinthians (cf. i. 12, where see exposition), and who had evidently withdrawn from the arena and joined the Apostle at Ephesus. But Apollos had declined the office, judging reasonably that meanwhile his presence at Corinth would only aggravate the trouble.

His conference with the three Corinthian deputies had been pleasant to the Apostle. No doubt they represented the three parties in the distracted church—those who had stood faithful

to himself, the intellectuals who swore by Apollos, and the Judaists who swore by Cephas (cf. i. 12) ; and Stephanas, his earliest convert in Achaia (cf. i. 16) would represent the first. Even Fortunatus and Achaicus, the representatives of the other parties, had shown themselves reasonable, and all three had heartily approved his charitable enterprise, "enlisting themselves for ministration to the saints." It was a cheering evidence of the spirit of the church which they represented : "the service which ye could not render, these supplied."

It proves how widespread was the interest aroused by the Corinthian troubles that the Apostle sends greetings not alone from his immediate circle at Ephesus but from all the churches of the Province of Asia. And why should he send a special and warm greeting from Aquila and Prisca and "the church in their house." Since they had resided at Corinth ere their settlement at Ephesus, they had a personal concern in the situation there ; and it had been constantly remembered at the Throne of Grace by the company which assembled at their house, after the fashion of those early days when as yet there was no common meeting-place for public worship (cf. Rom. xvi. 5).

Hitherto the Apostle has dictated the epistle to his amanuensis Sosthenes (cf. i. 1), but here (vers. 21-24) after his wont by way of authentication he enters his sign-manual with a benediction. Observe that sentence : "If any man loveth not the Lord ("Jesus Christ" is a copyist's addition, indicating who "the Lord" was in Christian parlance), let him be *anathema*," that is, "accursed" (cf. xii. 3). Here the sentence ends. Amid the bitter strife curses were flying thick, and the Apostle reads a lesson in charity by declaring that the sole test is love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not Thine the bigot's partial plea,
Nor Thine the zealot's ban ;
Thou well canst spare a love of Thee
Which ends in hate of man.

And then he adds *Maranatha*—an Aramaic phrase which served in early days as a Christian watchword. It is really two words, and their division determines its precise significance. Read

maran atha, and it is an admonition—"The Lord is coming," "The Lord is at hand" (cf. Phil. iv. 5). Read *marana tha*, and it is a prayer—"O Lord, come!" (cf. Rev. xxii. 20). In either case it is an enforcement of the lesson in charity. The remembrance that not merely will the Lord come again to judgment but that He is at hand, ever near us, an Unseen Presence in our midst, refrains bitter thoughts and cruel words.

SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL
TO THE CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

THIS is the most puzzling of St. Paul's Epistles. The difficulty is that it seems, as it were, to break in two.

First it celebrates the happy ending of the strife which had so long distracted the church at Corinth. In nine glowing chapters the Apostle pours forth the exultant gladness and tender affection of his heart ; and then suddenly his tone changes, and as though the strife were still raging more fiercely than ever he assails the Corinthians with stern condemnation and indignant remonstrance. The explanation is that the epistle, as it stands in the canonical collection of his correspondence, is not a single letter but a combination of two.

Observe the course of events as incidentally revealed on its pages. It was in June of the year 55 that the preceding epistle, commonly known as "First Corinthians," was despatched from Ephesus in charge of the three Corinthian deputies ; and thereafter the Apostle anxiously awaited the return of Timothy and his company with a report of their mission to Corinth and the effect of the letter (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11, where see exposition). Their report proved sadly disappointing, insomuch that in the autumn he interrupted his busy ministry at Ephesus to visit Corinth, in the fond hope that the reappearance of its founder in the church's midst might assuage its contentions (cf. 2 Cor. ii. 1, xii. 14, xiii. 1, 2, where see exposition). But his mission was unavailing. He encountered angry recrimination and coarse insult, especially on the part of the Judaists ; and, returning to Ephesus, he wrote, toward the close of the year, a stern letter to the ungracious church, tingling with grief and indignation (cf. 2 Cor. ii. 2-4, vii. 8).

A portion at least of that painful letter is incorporated with our present epistle (x-xiii. 10). It was conveyed to Corinth by Titus (cf. 2 Cor. ii. 13, vii. 13-15), that Gentile convert who had accompanied Paul and Barnabas from Syrian Antioch on their

charitable mission to Jerusalem on the occasion of the famine in the year 46 (cf. Ac. xi. 27-30 ; Gal. ii. 1), and who had been associated with the Apostle in his third mission to aid in organising the collection for the poor at Jerusalem (cf. 2 Cor. viii. 19), and was favourably known at Corinth in this capacity (cf. viii. 6, 16, 17, xii. 17, 18). His errand now was not simply to deliver the stern letter but to reinforce it with his personal influence ; and the result amply justified his appointment to the difficult and delicate task.

Hardly had he taken his departure when in January, 56, the Apostle was driven from Ephesus (cf. Ac. xx. 1). Travelling northward in the expectation of meeting Titus on his return journey by the overland route and learning how his mission had fared, he stayed at Troas till early summer, and then proceeded to Macedonia (cf. 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13). There at length toward the month of September (see exposition of v. 1) he encountered Titus and learned the happy issue of his Corinthian embassy, and with a thankful heart he wrote a glad letter to the penitent church. That glad letter is the main body of our "Second Corinthians" (i-ix, xiii. 11-14).

SUMMARY

THE GLAD LETTER

(i-ix, xiii. 11-14)

	PASSAGE	PAGE
THANKSGIVING	i. 1-14	507
PERSONAL MATTERS	i. 15-ii	510
A GLORIOUS MINISTRY	iii-iv. 6	517
ITS INSPIRATION	iv. 7-v. 10	522
AN EVANGELICAL APPEAL	v. 11-vi. 10	528
KINDLY REASSURANCE	vi. 11-vii	533
THE COLLECTION (viii, ix) :		
1. INSPIRING EXAMPLES	viii	537
2. PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS	ix	543

THE STERN LETTER

(x-xiii. 10)

CRUEL TAUNTS	x	549
VINDICATION OF APOSTOLIC CLAIMS (xi-xii. 10) :		
1. SELF-ABNEGATION	xi. 1-20	553
2. HEROIC DEVOTION	xi. 21-33	557
3. VISIONS AND REVELATIONS	xii. 1-10	560
STERN REMONSTRANCE	xii. 11-xiii	566

THE GLAD LETTER

i-ix, xiii. 11-14

THANKSGIVING

i. I-14

1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia :*

2 *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

3 *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort ;*

4 *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

5 *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.*

6 *And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which *is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer : or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.*

7 *And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.*

8 *For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life :*

9 *But we had the †sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead :*

10 *Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver : in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us ;*

11 *Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.*

* Or, is wrought.

† Or, answer.

12 *For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.*

13 *For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge ; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end ;*

14 *As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are our's in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

IT was probably, as the traditional subscription affirms, at Philippi, the chief city of eastern Macedonia, where ever since the close of the year 50 Luke had ministered (see exposition of Ac. xvi. 40), that the Apostle wrote ; and it would enhance his gladness that so true a friend was there to share it. Observe how his characteristic generosity is displayed in the address. (1) He employs Timothy as his amanuensis, thus not merely evincing continued confidence in him despite the failure of his mission to Corinth but assuring the Corinthians that their ill reception of him was not forgotten (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11). (2) He addresses not alone "the Church of God at Corinth" (cf. 1 Cor. i. 1) but "all the saints in the whole of Achaia." All the Christians in the Province—at Cenchreæ (cf. Rom. xvi. 1), Athens (cf. Ac. xvii. 16–34), and elsewhere—knew of the Corinthians' evil behaviour, and he would have them know also of their "repentance, love, and new obedience."

See with what delicacy, what tenderness, what generosity he handles the situation, approving himself now as ever a chivalrous Christian gentleman. One unacquainted with the circumstances would hardly guess that those whom he addresses in this glowing passage had played so ill a part. It was written to comfort them and assure them how fully they had re-established themselves in his esteem.

All is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,
Lo ! I forgive thee, as Eternal God
Forgives.

Yet he never mentions, never even suggests their evil behaviour. He speaks of an exceeding comfort which God had vouchsafed

him in a sore affliction, and of his desire that as they had shared his affliction, they should share his comfort too. "If," he says according to the authentic text (ver. 6), "we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is set a-working in endurance of the same sufferings which we are experiencing." Well they knew what his affliction had been. It was their disloyalty which had grieved him, the more sorely that all the while he had been so hardly beset at Ephesus (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 30-32); and lest they should think he was reproaching them, he hastens to explain that it was this latter that he had in view. "We would not have you ignorant, brethren, of our affliction which befell in Asia. Its weight was excessive, so overpowering that we despaired even of life; nay, in our hearts we had come to the decision that we must die." It was they—by their repentance, as they would understand—that had cheered and comforted him in this sore affliction; and he assures them (vers. 12-14) that his regard for them had never wavered. It was no new love that he was now expressing: it had been constant in his heart in all his dealings with them. "For it is nothing else that we are writing to you than what ye know from our letters or indeed from personal recognition—and I hope ye will recognise our disposition to the full, as indeed ye have done in a measure—that we are your rejoicing, even as ye are ours, on the Day of our Lord Jesus."

PERSONAL MATTERS

i. 15-ii

15 *And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second *benefit ;*

16 *And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judæa.*

17 *When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness ? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay ?*

18 *But as God is true, our †word toward you was not yea and nay.*

19 *For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.*

20 *For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.*

21 *Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God ;*

22 *Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

23 *Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.*

24 *Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy : for by faith ye stand.*

1 *But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness.*

2 *For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me ?*

* Or, *grace.*

† Or, *preaching.*

3 *And I wrote the same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice ; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all.*

4 *For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears ; not that he should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.*

5 *But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part : that I may not overcharge you all.*

6 *Sufficient to such a man is this *punishment, which was inflicted of many.*

7 *So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.*

8 *Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.*

9 *For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.*

10 *To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also : for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it †in the person of Christ ;*

11 *Lest Satan should get an advantage of us : for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

12 *Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,*

13 *I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother : but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.*

14 *Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.*

15 *For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish :*

16 *To the one we are the savour of death unto death ; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things ?*

* Or, *censure.*

† Or, *in the sight.*

17 *For we are not as many, which *corrupt the word of God : but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.*

HERE the Apostle deals with a long-standing grievance. It was at the beginning of the year 53 that he had quitted Corinth after his fifteen months' ministry there, with a promise that he would soon revisit his converts, "that they might receive a second grace." But the time had passed, and still he had never appeared ; and hard things had been said of him on this score during the unhappy strife, insomuch that, writing to them in June, 55, he had taken occasion to assure them that his promise, though delayed, was not forgotten, and he hoped soon to fulfil it (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 5-9).

Still the grievance persisted, and now, by way of convincing his penitent disciples of his constant affection, he explains with exceeding gentleness wherefore it was that he had stayed away so long. They had charged him with levity, imputing to him the common fashion of playing fast and loose with his promises, saying with one breath "Yea, yea," and with the next, when it suited him, "Nay, nay," And "'ay' and 'no' too," they protested, "was no good divinity." He repudiates the charge, appealing to their experience of him in the days when he and Silas and Timothy had ministered among them (cf. Ac. xviii. 5). And herewith he deftly turns the charge against themselves. Think of the promises of God : what is the condition of their fulfilment ? It is our believing response. In Christ God says "Yea" ; and when we answer "Amen," then the covenant is sealed. "For," says the Apostle according to the authentic reading of the passage, "howsoever many be God's promises, in Him is the 'Yea' ; wherefore also through Him is the 'Amen,' that God may be glorified through us."

It may be indeed that their fulfilment is delayed, but it is sure ; and the pledge thereof, God's sealing of the covenant, is "the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." See what this means. "Earnest" is not a translation but, like the old French *errhes* a corrupted transliteration of the original *arrhabon*, which,

* Or, deal deceitfully with.

though frequent in the speech of his day, is employed by the Apostle alone of the New Testament writers (cf. v. 5 ; Eph. i. 14). It was a merchant's phrase, borrowed of old by Jews, Greeks, and Romans alike from the Phœnicians, that race of traders ; and in the sole instance where it occurs in the Old Testament (Gen. xxxviii. 17, 18, 20), our Version has "pledge"—a fair enough rendering, since the word properly denoted the small sum which a purchaser paid down on the making of a bargain as a security for full quittance in due course. It is the Old English "wedde," frequent in Chaucer, as Wycliffe has it here, "a wedde (or ernes) of the spirit," and the Scottish "arles"—an old phrase still in use at the hiring of a ploughman, who "takes arles" as a foretaste of his full wage when he has earned it. "I suppose," says Roland Græme in *The Abbot* to Catherine Seyton, "you wept yourself blind when St. Catherine broke up housekeeping before you had taken arles in her service," meaning the noviciate's vow. And as the word was used in early Christian days of a man's gifts to his betrothed, so is it still in Modern Greek of the engagement-ring. And what is the pledge of God's promises—His "arles," His "wedde," His "earnest"? It is the grace of the Holy Spirit which He sheds upon us when our "Amen" responds to His "Yea," the peace which takes possession of our hearts when we rest believingly upon His word, assured of His faithfulness and resigned to His blessed and invincible will.

I have no cares, O blessed Will !
For all my cares are Thine ;
I live in triumph, Lord ! for Thou
Hast made Thy triumphs mine.

Here lay the justification of the Apostle's seeming neglect of the Corinthians. It was their unfaithfulness that had prevented the fulfilment of his promise. And it was in kindness that he had stayed away so long, in the hope that they would bethink themselves and by timely repentance and reformation of the evils which he had censured in his letters, "written out of great distress and anguish of heart through blinding tears" (ii. 4), they would spare both him and themselves the sorrow of an unhappy

meeting—such a meeting as they had actually had when, as they would shamefastly remember, he had eventually paid them that hasty visit just a year ago (see Introduction).

To be wroth with those we love
Doth work like madness in the brain ;

and he had “ determined in his own interest that he should not visit them again on a grievous errand.”

But that embarrassment was happily removed now by their hearty repentance, evinced by their sorrow and their reformation of the abuses which he had censured, particularly their dealing with that foul case which had been the prime occasion of the trouble (cf. 1 Cor. v), in accordance with his long-neglected mandate. His mandate had been that the offender—“ a certain one,” as he had designated him allusively—should be excluded from the church’s fellowship until he had purged himself of his guilt ; but on his arraignment he was already penitent, and he had forthwith been absolved. That was the decision of the majority, but there were some who counselled severity. These represented the party in the church which had supported the Apostle throughout the trouble (cf. 1 Cor. i. 12) ; and, remembering how sorely he had been grieved, they resented the leniency of the decision. Here, while appreciating their devotion, he found opportunity for a salutary display of magnanimity. “ Sufficient for such a man is that verdict pronounced by the majority ; so that ye should reverse your attitude and rather forgive and comfort him, lest such a man should be swallowed up by his excessive grief.” Thus would they best evince their loyalty to himself. “ It is to this end indeed that I am writing, that I may put you to the proof and discover whether ye are obedient in every respect.” And he indicates two reasons. (1) The matter was not personal to himself. “ If a certain one (cf. 1 Cor. v. 1) hath caused grief, it is not to me that he hath caused it ; no, in a measure—not to be too hard on him—it is to you all.” And if others could forgive the common wrong, why should not the Apostle ? (2) Their very love for him was proving a snare to his friends ; for they were playing into the hands of

Satan, the Enemy of the Gospel, in prosecuting the feud to the bitter end and frustrating the fair hope of peace. "What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is on your account in face of Christ, that we may not be overreached by Satan; for we do not ignore his devices."

The settlement of the long strife was indeed a blessed deliverance, and he recalls the gladness which had filled his heart when he heard the tidings. How troubled he had been when he was driven from Ephesus! He had betaken himself to Troas, thinking to meet Titus by the way and learn how he had prospered in his mission to Corinth; but, "though a door had there been opened for him in the Lord," even so he "had no relief for his spirit" and pushed on to Macedonia. There he met Titus and heard the good news; and he hailed it as a triumph of grace. And what was "a triumph" in the language of imperial Rome? A conqueror rode into the city in his chariot, and before him was led the long train of his fettered captives. And as he passed, he was greeted with plaudits, his path was strewn with garlands, and the air was laden with their fragrance and the breath of incense wafted from the open temples. Our Version mars the picture when it reads: "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph," as though the Apostle were the conqueror. It was not his triumph but Christ's; and he and the penitent Corinthians were the captives of His grace, trophies of His victorious love. "Thanks unto God, who always leadeth us in His triumphal train in Christ and wafteth the odour of His knowledge abroad through us in every place!" The fragrance of the flowers and the incense soon vanished; but the fragrance of Christ clings to His captives, and they carry it with them evermore—a healing fragrance where it is welcomed, but fatal where it is scorned.

A flower is known by its fragrance; and "even such," says Marcus Aurelius, "must be the simple and good man as one that hath an odour, so that the bystander, as soon as he approacheth, may, will he, nill he, perceive it." Well may misgivings assail us lest the odour we carry be other than the fragrance of Christ. So hard is it, even for such as know Him and would fain honour Him, to breathe His spirit by reason

of their manifold infirmities. Thus it was with John Calvin, whose maladies, says old Isaac D'Israeli in his *Curiosities of Literature*, "irritated his dispositions. He had, indeed, so much acerbity in his temper, that he became unsupportable to those who were near him. It was this that occasioned many Germans to say—'that they preferred being in hell with Beza, to being in paradise with Calvin.' " "Who," asks the Apostle, "is sufficient for these things?" Yet he humbly claims that he has succeeded, forasmuch as he had, as the Corinthians could attest, honestly and lovingly ministered the Gospel. "For we are not, like so many, adulterators of the wine of God's Word. No, it is in its purity, it is just as God gave it, that we speak it before God in Christ."

A GLORIOUS MINISTRY

iii-iv. 6

1 *Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?*

2 *Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:*

3 *Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.*

4 *And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:*

5 *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;*

6 *Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit *giveth life.*

7 *But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:*

8 *How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?*

9 *For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.*

10 *For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.*

11 *For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.*

12 *Seeing then that we have such hope, we used great †plainness of speech:*

* Or, quickeneth.

† Or, boldness.

13 *And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished :*

14 *But their minds were blinded : for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament ; which vail is done away in Christ.*

15 *But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.*

16 *Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.*

17 *Now the Lord is that Spirit : and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

18 *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as *by the Spirit of the Lord.*

1 *Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not ;*

2 *But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully ; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

3 *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost :*

4 *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

5 *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*

6 *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, †hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

THAT is a large and it may seem an arrogant claim that the Apostle has just advanced (ii. 17) ; and here he justifies it. First he indicates what was in his mind when he said he was not "like so many." It was a reference to his Judaist traducers, who had appeared at Corinth armed,

* Or, of the Lord the Spirit.

† Gr. is he who hath.

after the fashion of the day (cf. Rom. xvi. 1), with "letters of commendation" from the leaders of their party at Jerusalem and challenged his authority forasmuch as he had no such credentials. In truth he needed none. His converts were themselves his credentials—his letter of commendation, open to the world, "inscribed not with ink but with the Spirit of the Living God, not," like the Law of Moses (cf. Ex. xxxiv. 1), "on tables of stone but," like the Law of the New Covenant promised of old (cf. Jer. xxxi. 33), "on 'the tables of the heart' (cf. Pr. iii. 3, vii. 3), tables of flesh." There lay the ground of his "trust," his "confidence," the proof of his "sufficiency." "Not that of our own resources are we sufficient; no, our sufficiency is of God, who also made us sufficient for the ministry of a new covenant."

And what a ministry this is! (1) It is a ministry of life; and here lies its distinction from the ministry of the Old Covenant ratified by the "written code" of the Law. "The written code killeth, but the Spirit," by "inscribing the Law on our hearts," so that it is no longer an outward restraint but an inward affection, "giveth life." "The sap of a tree," says Erskine of Linlathen, "requires no laws to instruct it as to the nature of the fruit which it should produce. It is a law unto itself." So the Apostle demonstrates at large out of his own experience in his Epistle to the Romans (cf. vii. 7-13, viii. 1-6). The Law could not justify a sinner; it only convicted and condemned him. (2) It is a ministry of grace and not of fear. God was terrible to sinners under the Old Covenant. It is written (Ex. xxxiv) that at the giving of the Law, when Moses went up into Mount Sinai, he went alone, and bounds were set unto the people round about, that none might up into the mount or touch the border of it. But, says Jeremy Taylor, "the Saviour of the world became human, alluring, full of invitation and the sweetnesses of love, exemplary, humble, and medicinal." And (3) its glory endures. It is written further that, while Moses communed with God alone on the top of the mount, "the skin of his face shone" or, as the Greek Version has it, "was glorified, as he talked with Him." It still shone when he descended to the people, and "they were afraid to come nigh him," until he

called them unto him. While he talked with them, they beheld the glory on his face ; but it was a passing glory, and “ when he had done speaking unto them (Ex. xxxiv. 33 R.V.), Moses put a veil upon his face, in order,” explains the Apostle, “ that they might not gaze at the end of the transient thing,” lest it should seem to them that the Lord had forsaken them.

Far other in all these particulars is the glory of the New Covenant. It is a tender grace, shining evermore “ in the face of Jesus Christ ” (iv. 6)—

Those great eyes which do not hate, nor blast,
But send a keen light to my inmost self.

And the glory of the Old Covenant has faded before it, as the starlight before the sunrise, “ by reason of the glory that excelleth.” Here after his wont (cf. Rom. ix. 1-5) the Apostle’s compassion flows out to unbelieving Israel, “ his kinsmen according to the flesh.” Would that they were delivered from the bondage of the Old Covenant and knew the liberty of the Spirit ! Then would they cast aside the veil which “ to this day remaineth upon their reading of the Old Covenant,” still “ lying on their heart whenever Moses is read.” A vision of the glory of God in Christ’s blessed face would suffice. See how he puts it in language which our Version ill construes : “ And we all, seeing with unveiled face the reflection of the Lord’s glory, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory according the wonted operation of the Lord the Spirit.” Observe that in this passage, where he speaks of “ the Lord,” it is the Holy Spirit that is meant, as he expressly intimates (ver. 17) : “ ‘ The Lord ’ is here the Spirit ”—the Successor of our Lord, whom the Father has sent in His name (cf. Jo. xiv. 26). And the face of Jesus Christ (cf. iv. 6)—that blessed face imperishably limned by the Evangelists, “ the sweetest face that ever looked with human eyes ”—is the mirror where the tender grace of the Holy Spirit is evermore reflected. One look of that face softens the heart ; and with each fresh look, even as the dyer’s hand is “ subdued to what it works in,” its likeness is imprinted ever deeper and clearer on our souls, till we are

“transformed into the same image,” not in a moment but “from glory to glory”—glory ever fuller.

And here the Apostle reverts to his claim that he was no “adulterator of God’s Word” (cf. ii. 17)—a charge which had been cast at him in the course of the bitter controversy, especially by the Judaists, who had styled him “a crafty trickster” (cf. xii. 16), seeking his own advantage and perverting the Scriptures to his own ends. Such baseness, he answers, was unthinkable in the prosecution of so glorious a ministry. “No,” he cries, quoting their scurrilous phrases, “we have renounced shameful concealments, never ‘playing the trickster’ or”—not merely “handling deceitfully” but—“sophisticating the Word of God,” in the old sense of corrupting it by admixture, as a dishonest vintner did with his wine. The Gospel was too sacred and precious to his own heart for such handling. He had experienced its grace, and his sole endeavour was that others might share it. “It is not ourselves that we proclaim; it is Christ Jesus as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake, because it is the God that said ‘Light shall shine out of darkness’ who shone in our hearts that we might illumine others with the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

ITS INSPIRATION

iv. 7—v. 10

7 *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

8 *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; we are perplexed, but *not in despair ;*

9 *Persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed ;*

10 *Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*

11 *For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.*

12 *So then death worketh in us, but life in you.*

13 *We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken ; we also believe, and therefore speak ;*

14 *Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.*

15 *For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.*

16 *For which cause we faint not ; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*

17 *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ;*

18 *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

1 *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

* Or, not altogether without help, or, means.

2 *For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven :*

3 *If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.*

4 *For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened : not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*

5 *Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.*

6 *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord :*

7 *(For we walk by faith, not by sight :)*

8 *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*

9 *Wherefore we *labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.*

10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ : that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

IT was a constant sneer of the Apostle's adversaries that he was physically a feeble creature (cf. x. 10 ; 1 Cor. i. 26-29, where see exposition), "a poor writhled manikin, like our Philip (Melanchthon)," as Luther has it—an ungenerous taunt which was of old at once more galling and less unpardonable than it would be nowadays. For it was an ancient idea which persisted long, that since, says Bacon, "there is a Consent between the Body and the Minde," any sort of physical deformity had its corresponding mental deformity. It was Nature's stigma or brand, and not only was there a Latin maxim "Beware of those on whom God hath set His mark" but in Shakespeare's day a deformed person was styled "a stigmatic."

He is deformed, crooked, old, and sere,
Ill-faced, worse bodied, shapeless everywhere ;
Vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind ;
Stigmatical in making, worse in mind.

* Or, *endeavour*.

And with the Jews the notion carried a cruel sting, forasmuch as the Levitical law had ordained that not only must a sacrificial victim be unblemished, but so also must the priest who ministered at the altar (cf. Lev. xxi. 16-24) ; and in later days no fewer than a hundred and forty disqualifying blemishes were enumerated. Hence on the lips of his Judaist adversaries that sneer was nothing less than a coarse denial of St. Paul's apostleship.

See how he introduces it here. Referring to his claim that he ministered the fragrant and precious wine of God's Word "unadulterated," "unsophisticated" (cf. ii. 17, iv. 2), he admits that it was served in "earthen vessels"—"britel vessels," as Wycliffe has it, not, as were most fitting, in jewelled cups of gold but in worthless pots of fragile clay. And what then?

1. It is told of St. Francis of Assisi that once he was asked why all the world went after him, why all men wished to see him, to hear him, and to obey his word, though he was neither comely nor learned nor of noble birth. "Know," he replied, "that it is because the Lord who is in Heaven, and sees the evil and the good in all places—because His holy eyes have not found among men a more wicked, a more imperfect, or a greater sinner than I am. For this reason He has chosen me, to confound force, beauty, greatness, birth, and all the science of the world, that man may learn that every virtue and every good gift comes from Him, and not from the creature." And therefore, says the Apostle, was the royal wine of Heaven served in earthen vessels—"that the transcendence of the power may be God's and no achievement of ours."

O God, thy arm was here ;
And not to us, but to thy arm alone,
Ascribe we all ! . . . Take it, God,
For it is none but thine.

2. It was a shame to his adversaries when they sneered at the weakness of his bodily presence. Feeble as he was, he was fighting a hard battle, and fighting it bravely, "distressed yet never straitened, perplexed yet never at his wits' end, hard pressed yet never left in the lurch, stricken down yet never destroyed." And

even if that were all, he merited praise ; for, said the Stoic philosopher of Rome, " a brave man struggling with adversity is a spectacle for the gods." But the Apostle was not fighting for his own hand. He was labouring for others, traversing land and sea in weariness and peril for no other reward but the winning of men for Christ. " It is all for your sakes, that grace may spread from soul to soul and make thanksgiving abound to the glory of God " (ver. 15).

3. There was thus an exceeding sacredness in that weakness of the Apostle which his adversaries derided, inasmuch as it was incurred in the service of Christ. He was treading the path which the Saviour had trodden before him and sharing the lot which He had endured in the days of His flesh, " always carrying about in his body Jesus' wasting to death, that the life of Jesus also might be manifested in his body." Life was for him a continual dying ; and the faith which sustained him was the assurance that he was thereby attaining to an ampler life. " Though our outward man is wasting away, yet our inward man is being renewed day by day." And in prospect of that " eternal weight of glory," unseen as yet, how light seemed " the distress of the moment " which was " working it out for him ever more and more transcendently " !

The hope which thus filled the Apostle's heart was, as the Corinthians would understand, that blessed consummation whereof he had written to them fully a year ago (cf. 1 Cor. xv)—the resurrection of the body, when " this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality " ; and lest they should be in doubt he expressly so tells them. " We know that if our earthly house of the tabernacle be dismantled, we have one of God's building, a house which no hands have made, eternal, in the heavens." Whence this novel designation of our mortal body as " our earthly house of the tabernacle " ? There is nothing in the context to suggest it ; but understand that the Apostle was writing in the autumn of 56, and the Feast of Tabernacles fell that year on Sep. 13. The joyous festival (see exposition of Lk. x. 38-42) was in his readers' minds, and it suggested the phrase. Most fitly are these mortal bodies which now enwrap our immortal souls, styled " tabernacles," frail

tents which shelter us during our earthly pilgrimage, often torn and broken and continually wasting with decay, and a sore burden to us on the weary march. "We who are in the tabernacle groan under its weight," and we would fain exchange it for "our heavenly habitation."

But here the Apostle pauses. Of old, even where the hope of immortality was cherished, death was a cold prospect. For the dissolution of the body meant the stripping of the soul and its banishment from "the warm precincts of the cheerful day" to wander, "pallid, shivering, naked," in a world of insubstantial ghosts. In the midst of his high argument on immortality Plato shuddered at the prospect. And the dread thereof is instinctive in the human breast. It is as old as Homer.

Ah, speak not lightly unto me of death !
Far rather would I till the ground, a thrall
To some mean wight whose livelihood was scant,
Than lord it kingly o'er the shadowy dead.

It was the Christian faith in the resurrection of the body that first opened a door of hope, yet it only partially allayed the heart's misgiving. For death precedes resurrection, and how will the soul fare during the interval of disembodiment ?

It was this blank uncertainty that made the primitive Christians fain to believe in an immediate return of our Lord, that so they might never die but "be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52). And the Apostle shared the fond hope. "In this tabernacle we groan, desiring to put on over it our heavenly habitation, if so be that by putting it on we shall not be found naked. For indeed we who are in the tabernacle groan under its weight, on the understanding that it is not our wish to put off our vesture, no, but to put on a vesture over it, that the mortal thing may be swallowed up by life." So would he fain have it ; yet even if his hope failed and he must die, he was of good courage. For God had given him "the earnest of the Spirit" (see exposition of i. 22), and what he had already tasted of His sovereign grace assured him that, come what might, all would be well. Disembodiment might seem a cheerless prospect, but in life and death alike he was in the

Lord's good keeping. " Therefore, being always courageous and knowing that, while we are at home in the body, we are exiled from the Lord ; for it is by faith that our steps are guided, not by sight—ay, we are courageous and are well content rather to be exiled from the body and get home to the Lord. And therefore also our ambition is that, whether at home or in exile, we should be well pleasing to Him."

My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim ;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with Him.

AN EVANGELICAL APPEAL

V. II-VI. 10

11 *Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men ; but we are made manifest unto God ; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.*

12 *For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory *in appearance, and not in heart.*

13 *For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God : or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.*

14 *For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead :*

15 *And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*

16 *Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh : yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.*

17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, †he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new.*

18 *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation ;*

19 *To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; and hath ‡committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

20 *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us : we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

* Gr. in the face.

† Or, let him be.

‡ Gr. put in us.

1 *We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.*

2 *(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee : behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation.)*

3 *Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed :*

4 *But in all things *approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,*

5 *In stripes, in imprisonments, †in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings ;*

6 *By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,*

7 *By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,*

8 *By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report : as deceivers, and yet true ;*

9 *As unknown, and yet well known ; as dying, and, behold, we live ; as chastened and not killed ;*

10 *As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

THE repentance of the Corinthians gladdened the Apostle, yet all the while he wondered how far it reached. Was it evangelical repentance, or merely personal contrition for their disloyalty to himself and their ill requital of the debt they owed him ? This is the question which he now raises ; and see how tactfully he introduces it.

First he tells them his motive—" knowing therefore (not " the terror " but) the fear of the Lord." And what does " the fear of the Lord " mean ? It is a phrase of the Old Testament, and very wise and tender is its significance there. Thus (Ps. cxi. 10 ; Pr. i. 7) : " The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," " the beginning of knowledge."

* Gr. *commending*.

† Or, *in tossings to and fro*.

The dog that does not know
 A master, like a savage wolf will grow,
 Hating his lot,
 And is a sorry brute, until he find
 A mightier will than his, and nobler mind.
 And this would be the hapless lot of men
 Without God's fear.

Again (Pr. xiv. 26, 27): "The fear of the Lord is a strong confidence," "a fountain of life." And yet again (xv. 16): "Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith." What "faith in God" is in the New Testament, that is "the fear of the Lord" in the Old—a reverent and trustful surrender to His blessed will; and because the Apostle knew what strength, what security, what gladness this brings, he would have others know it too.

Hence the importunity of his preaching, his affectionate pleading which his adversaries censured as the plausibility of a wily tongue (cf. i. 17, 18; Gal. i. 10). "It is because we know 'the fear of the Lord' that we 'persuade men'; and," he adds, "to God we have appeared in our true colours, and I hope that at the bar of your consciences also we have so appeared." Another sneer was that he was "beside himself." So was it said of our Lord (cf. Mk. iii. 21); and so has an unbelieving world always deemed of His prophets. "Oh, Chalmers—he is mad!" was the common reply of the Moderates to every mention of the great leader of the Evangelicals in the Scottish Church a century ago. And it is told how a Glasgow physician encountered two acquaintances one Sunday morning and inquired whither they were going. "To St. John's," said they, "to hear Dr. Chalmers." "What! that madman?" and out of curiosity he accompanied them. By a curious coincidence the preacher's text was "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness" (Ac. xxvi. 25); and the sermon won the stranger to the evangelical faith. What had seemed to him madness was a vision of life in the light of Eternity; and the Apostle shows how that vision is attained. It is a discovery of the love of Christ that makes the difference. "The love of Christ holdeth us fast." And what then?

Ah ! the Master is so fair,
His smile so sweet to banished men,
That they who meet it unaware
Can never rest on earth again.

And they who see Him risen afar
At God's right hand to welcome them,
Forgetful stand of home and land,
Desiring fair Jerusalem.

“ This is our judgment : One died on behalf of all ; consequently all died ; and He died on behalf of all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who on their behalf died and was raised.” Once we have realised this, everything is transfigured in our eyes. We see life and the world and our fellow men in the light of His beautiful face. “ We henceforth know none according to the flesh ”—not even Him. For He is more to us now than a mere historic personage who once lived and died among men. He is the Living Lord, the Eternal Saviour. “ Though we have conceived of a Christ according to the flesh, yet now that is no longer our conception. And so, if one be in Christ, there is a new creation : the old order hath passed away ; behold, a new order hath arisen.”

Hence the Apostle's appeal to the penitent Corinthians. In those days when their hearts were fondly turning to the teacher whom they had so wronged, they had need to turn also to the Saviour. And so he pleads with them as “ an ambassador on Christ's behalf ” : “ We pray you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.” Observe the phrase. As it is in the original, it is peculiar to St. Paul in the New Testament ; and he never speaks of the reconciliation of God to sinners but always, with studious precision, of the reconciliation of sinners to God (cf. Rom. v. 10 ; Eph. ii. 14-16 ; Col. i. 19-21). And so here he tells the Corinthians that it was not God who needed to be reconciled ; for the enmity was all on their side, and the evidence was before their eyes in “ that wonderful redemption, God's remedy for sin.” And see how he says in one breath that “ God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself,” and in the next that “ Him who never knew sin He made ” not “ a sinner ” but “ sin on our behalf,” dealing at one stroke not with the sin of one and

another but with the sin of the whole world. Since Christ was God manifest in the flesh, His Sacrifice was God's Sacrifice. It was not His reconciliation of God to the world ; it was God's reconciliation of the world to Himself. And thus the way stands open for sinners to return ; and the Apostle's appeal to the Corinthians was Christ's appeal. " It is in co-operation with Him that we also are making entreaty." And who had a better right ? They were his converts, and he had a peculiar interest in them, a personal concern lest " it should be in vain that they had welcomed the grace of God." And his appeal was enforced by their experience of him. They knew not only how blameless had been his ministry among them but what he owed in all his sufferings and perils to the grace which he was commending to them.

I love to tell the story :
It did so much for me ;
And that is just the reason
I tell it now to thee.

KINDLY REASSURANCE

vi. II-vii

II *O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.*

12 *Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.*

13 *Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.*

14 *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers : for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ?*

15 *And what concord hath Christ with Belial ? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel ?*

16 *And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols ? for ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

17 *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you,*

18 *And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty.*

I *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

2 *Receive us ; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.*

3 *I speak not this to condemn you : for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you.*

4 *Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you : I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.*

5 *For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side ; without were fightings, within were fears.*

6 *Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus ;*

7 *And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me ; so that I rejoiced the more.*

8 *For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent : for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.*

9 *Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance : for ye were made sorry *after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.*

10 *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of : but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*

11 *For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge ! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*

12 *Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.*

13 *Therefore we were comforted in your comfort : yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.*

14 *For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed ; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth.*

15 *And his †inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.*

16 *I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.*

* Or, according to God.

† Gr. bowels.

“TO be didactic,” says Philip Gilbert Hamerton, “is to be odious”; and after pouring out his heart to the Corinthians in passionate appeal the Apostle fears lest he may have offended thus. So here he playfully apologises, explaining that it was his very love for them that had carried him away. They were his spiritual children and, solicitous for their eternal welfare, he had used a fond father’s privilege.

Here again (cf. 1 Cor. vi. 12–20, where see exposition) the canonical text is encumbered by the interpolation of a fragment of the otherwise unpreserved letter which he had written some two years ago at the beginning of the long controversy (ver. 14–vii. 1). The evidence is threefold. (1) The section is manifestly alien from the present context, interrupting the Apostle’s argument. (2) It has to do with the vexatious practice of “mixed marriage”; and the Apostle’s prohibition of “unequal” or rather “incongruous yoking with unbelievers” raised that question which was submitted to him in the Corinthian rescript and which he dealt with in his reply thereto (cf. 1 Cor. vii. 12–14, where see exposition). (3) Observe how smoothly the argument runs when disencumbered of the alien verses. The nexus is marked by a play of words (cf. vi. 12, 13 and vii. 2) which, though plain in the original, is obliterated in our Version. Read the passage thus: “‘Our lips have been opened’ to you (cf. Ps. li. 15), Corinthians; ‘our heart hath been enlarged’ (Ps. cxix. 32). It is not in us that ye are straitened for room; it is in your own affections that ye are straitened. And as a recompense in kind—as to my children I am speaking—be ye also enlarged. Make room for us. We wronged no one, we damaged no one, we overreached no one.”

Thus reminding them of his affectionate and unselfish ministry among them (Sep., 51–Feb., 53), he claims that the love which he had shown them then and which was still warm in his heart, entitled him to deal frankly with them. And he adds a yet stronger reassurance. He tells them how dear they had been to him all through the long and unhappy contention. He recalls the distressful time when, driven from Ephesus, he was waiting in Macedonia for the return of Titus from his errand of conciliation to Corinth (cf. ii. 12, 13). His Judaist adversaries were busy

in the Macedonian churches, and he suffered their assaults ; but those “ fightings without ” were as nothing to his “ fears within ”—his anxiety for them, his wayward children at Corinth. And how comforted he was when Titus arrived with tidings of the happy issue ! One special anxiety he had felt during that distressful time—the remembrance of the sharp letter which he had written them after his hasty visit (see Introduction). Written in hot indignation, it was indeed very stern—perhaps, he feared, too stern ; and he almost regretted sending it. But the issue had justified it. “ Though,” he says according to the authentic text (ver. 8), “ I did regret it, perceiving that that letter grieved you, though but for a brief hour, I now rejoice, not that ye were grieved but that your grief issued in repentance.” That was the end for which he had written it, and its attainment was an exceeding comfort to him. And here he takes occasion to pay a generous tribute at once to Titus for his successful discharge of so difficult a mission and to them for their gracious reception of him. It was, he says (ver. 14), just what he had anticipated of both. “ However I may have boasted to him on your behalf, I was not put to shame ; no, as it was all truth that we spoke to you, so our boasting before Titus also turned out truth.”

THE COLLECTION (viii, ix)

I. INSPIRING EXAMPLES

viii

1 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia ;

2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their *liberality.

3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves ;

4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

5 And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same †grace also.

7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

10 And herein I give my advice : for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be ‡forward a year ago.

* Gr. simplicity.

† Or, gift.

Gr. willing.

11 *Now therefore perform the doing of it ; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.*

12 *For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

13 *For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened :*

14 *But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want : that there may be equality :*

15 *As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over ; and he that had gathered little had no lack.*

16 *But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.*

17 *For indeed he accepted the exhortation ; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.*

18 *And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches ;*

19 *And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this *grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind :*

20 *Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us :*

21 *Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.*

22 *And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which †I have in you.*

23 *Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow helper concerning you : or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.*

24 *Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.*

* Or, gift.

† Or, he hath.

IN the otherwise gladdening report which Titus had brought him of the Corinthians there was one particular which had disappointed the Apostle: they had as yet taken no steps toward doing their part by the Gentile fund for the relief of the impoverished church at Jerusalem. Remember the history of the movement, so far as they were concerned. Ere his setting out from Syrian Antioch on his third mission in July, 53, the Church had appointed Titus and at least one other as his "fellow-travellers in connection with the administration of this grace" (ver. 19); and shortly after his settlement at Ephesus in the following October he had despatched Titus to Corinth, to advocate its claims. The Corinthians had approved the proposal, but a question had arisen among them regarding the method of procedure. This they had submitted to the Apostle, and he had advised them thereon in his second letter in the early summer of 55 (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4). He had assumed that his directions would be duly followed, but now in Sep., 56, he has learned from Titus that nothing has been done.

And so he urges them to repair their neglect. His advice, when he wrote them over a year ago, had been that they should lay by every First Day of the Week and have their contribution ready when he visited them (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 2); and they still had time, since he must remain a little longer in Macedonia. Meanwhile he was sending Titus back to them, that he might not only convey this glad letter to them but "follow up the good beginning which he had already made by accomplishing among them this grace also" (ver. 6); and the Apostle here anticipates and enforces his appeal by an argument of his own. He commends to them three compelling examples.

1. That of the churches of Macedonia (vers. 1-7). Observe the drift of his argument here. Since her conquest by the Romans Greece was divided into the two provinces of Achaia and Macedonia. And the people were heavily oppressed. The country had been devastated by a succession of calamitous wars between Cæsar and Pompey, Brutus and Cassius, Augustus and Antony. Its cities had been ruined; and though Corinth, as the capital of Achaia and a commercial station on the route betwixt the East and the West, had lately regained much of her

ancient prosperity, the recovery of Macedonia was gravely impeded by the confiscation of the gold and silver mines whence she had formerly derived her chief wealth. Withal the people were loaded with a crushing burden of imperial taxation, and the severity of their distress is proved by their frequent petitions to the Senate for a relaxation of its demands.

Nevertheless such was the devotion of the churches of Macedonia that they had responded with surprising liberality to the Apostle's appeal. Indeed he would have restrained their effusive generosity, but they would take no refusal. "According to their ability, I testify, and beyond their ability, of their own free will with much entreaty they begged of us the privilege of participating in the ministry to the saints" (ver. 4).

2. The example of our Lord (vers. 8-15). "I am not speaking in the way of commandment," says the Apostle. For that is not the Gospel's way. It rather puts us on our honour, exhibiting the ideal and expecting a chivalrous response. And the ideal which the Apostle here exhibits in a moving sentence (ver. 9) is the example of our Blessed Lord. He gave no "commandment," but he gave his "advice" or rather his "judgment" by pointing out the obligation which that supreme example imposes on generous souls. "Grace," says the Greek dramatist, "ever begetteth grace"; and how can we contemplate our Lord's infinite sacrifice for us without emulating it in our dealings with others?

See how tactfully the Apostle presents the argument. First on the ground of their own profession over a year ago (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4), he assumes that the Corinthians recognised the obligation. Then, claiming that they should make good their profession, he states the requirement (ver. 12). It is the will that counts. "If the eagerness be there, it is acceptable according to the means it may have, not according to what it hath not." As St. Bernard has it: "As is thy will, so is thy merit. Men can love equally, whether rich or poor, though they cannot equally give money. But," he adds, "the will is not good if it work not what it can." This saving clause, though unexpressed by the Apostle, is plainly suggested; nor would his readers miss his intention after his commendation of the

Macedonians. The latter might well have pleaded their poverty and let the will stand for the deed; but the prosperous Corinthians had no such excuse. It is by each doing his part that the common burden is borne, and the old rule for the gathering of the manna in the wilderness is perpetually valid (Ex. xvi. 18): "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack." Selfishness is unprofitable. As Marcus Aurelius puts it in a memorable epigram, "what is unprofitable for the swarm, neither is it profitable for the bee." And the miser is brother to the spendthrift, as Lord Bacon teaches in his book of Apophthegms: "Mr. Bettenham, reader of Gray's Inn, used to say, that riches were like muck; when it lay in a heap, it gave but a stench and ill odour; but when it was spread over the ground, then it was cause of much fruit."

3. The example of Titus and his companions (vers. 16-24). Observe that, according to the Greek epistolary idiom, the verbs in this passage (vers. 17, 18, 22) should be rendered in the present tense—not "he accepted," "he went forth," "we have sent," but "he is accepting," "he is setting out," "we are sending." It was a delicate mission that was imposed on Titus, and his title to the consideration of the Corinthians was that he was one with the Apostle in his regard for them. "Thanks be to God who is putting the same earnestness on your behalf into the heart of Titus." And the evidence thereof was his alacrity in undertaking the task, so different from the reluctance which he had manifested when the Apostle despatched him on his irenical mission some ten months previously. His success on that occasion and the kindness of the penitent church (cf. vii. 13-16) had banished his apprehensions; and, says the Apostle, "he is not only accepting our appeal but his reluctance is all gone and of his own free will he is setting out to visit you."

And who were his associates? One the Apostle describes as "the brother whose praise in the Gospel is all over the churches, and who, moreover, hath been elected by the churches as our fellow-traveller in connection with this grace which is being ministered by us." And with good reason he was generally

recognised by the early Fathers as none other than Luke, who for nearly six years past had been ministering at Philippi (see exposition of i. 1). He was known and loved throughout Macedonia and the churches of the province had deputed him to accompany the Apostle to Jerusalem and present their contributions (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4). The latter is careful to mention this in view of the calumny of his enemies at Corinth during the heat of the controversy that he was enriching himself by the collection (cf. xii. 14-18). "It is," he says (vers. 19-21), "the Lord's own glory and our eagerness that we have in view; this being our concern—that no one should blame us in connection with this rich store which is being ministered by us; for we are 'safeguarding our honour' not only 'in the Lord's sight' but 'in the sight of men' (Gr. Vers. of Pr. iii. 4)." And as for that other, "our brother whose earnestness we have proved many a time in many a matter and now find largely increased by his large confidence in you," he seems to have been a commissioner appointed along with Titus by the church of Antioch to aid the Apostle in the business of the collection (see Introduction). In this capacity he had done good service, and in view of his colleague's report of the Corinthians he was confident that they would respond generously to the appeal.

All this the Apostle mentions by way of incentive. As his own "comrade and fellow-worker" during his long and troublous dealings with them Titus had a peculiar claim on their regard. And though the others were as yet personally unknown at Corinth, not only did their character merit consideration but in honouring them the Corinthians would be honouring the churches which they represented. "They are commissioners of churches, they are a glory of Christ. Therefore in demonstrating toward them your love and our boasting on your behalf ye are doing it in the face of the churches."

2. PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS

ix

1 *For as touching the ministering to the saints it is superfluous for me to write to you :*

2 *For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago ; and your zeal hath provoked very many.*

3 *Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf ; that, as I said, ye may be ready :*

4 *Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.*

5 *Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your *bounty, †whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness.*

6 *But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly ; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.*

7 *Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give ; not grudgingly, or of necessity : for God loveth a cheerful giver.*

8 *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you ; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work :*

9 *(As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad ; he hath given to the poor : his righteousness remaineth for ever.*

10 *Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness ;)*

* Gr. blessing.

† Or, which hath been so much spoken of before.

11 *Being enriched in every thing to all *bountifulness which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.*

12 *For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God ;*

13 *Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men ;*

14 *And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.*

15 *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.*

OBERVE the force of that initial "for." It glances back on the previous chapter. There the Apostle has spoken of high examples of generosity but never a word about the collection itself ; and here he justifies the omission : "For regarding the ministry to the saints it is superfluous for me to write you." The reason was not simply that so good a cause required no advocacy nor that Titus and his companions would present its claims but that the sympathy of the Corinthians was already enlisted. "For," he explains, "I know your eagerness."

If this were mere commendation, it would indeed have been undeserved ; and the Apostle's actual purpose was the gentle introduction of a severe reproach. The "eagerness" which he thus commends was the interest which the Corinthians had professed in the collection over a year ago when they consulted him regarding the method of taking it (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2). He had credited their profession, and he had held them up as an example to the Macedonians. And now that he has learned of their remissness, he appeals to them to save his face and their own. "Therefore I deemed it necessary to appeal to the brethren that they should go beforehand to you and arrange beforehand your afore-promised blessing, that it may thus be ready as a blessing and not as an exaction."

When, as he has already styled generosity "a grace" cf.

* Or, *liberally*. Gr. *simplicity*.

viii. 6, 7, 19), he now styles it “a blessing,” he proclaims a truth frequently affirmed on the pages of Holy Scripture and reaffirmed in Shakespeare’s immortal verse :

The quality of mercy is not strain’d,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath : it is twice blest ;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.

“Here,” says the Apostle (ver. 6), quoting a proverb of husbandry (cf. Gal. vi. 7), “is the rule : ‘Niggardly sowing, a niggardly harvest ; bountiful sowing, a bountiful harvest.’ ” And this law of Nature is also a law of Grace ; for it is written (Gr. Vers. of Pr. xxii. 9) that “God loveth a blithe giver.” And what says the Psalmist of the generous man (cxii. 9) ? “He scattered, he gave to the poor ; his righteousness abideth for ever.” The promise is not merely spiritual enrichment but a recompense in kind ; for it is written (Pr. x. 22 ; cf. xi. 24, 25) that “the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow therewith.” And this is no devout imagination but an assured experience ; and it is no miracle, forasmuch as a mind which “deviseth liberal things” has in it the quality that makes success. It is the blessing of the Lord that really counts ; and where this is lacking, there is no enduring prosperity. Truly was it said of old “Ill got, ill go (*male parta male dilabuntur*),” and again “Ill gotten wealth never reaches the third generation (*de male quæsitis non gaudet tertius hæres*).”

Tell me, didst thou never hear
That things ill got had ever bad success ?
And happy always was it for that son
Whose father for his hoarding went to hell ?

THE STERN LETTER

x - xiii. 10

CRUEL TAUNTS

X

I Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who *in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you :

2 But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which †think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh :

4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty ‡through God to the pulling down of strong holds ;))

5 Casting down §imagination, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ ;

6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

7 Do ye look on things after the outward appearance ? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's.

8 For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed :

9 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

10 For his letters ||say they, are weighty and powerful ; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.

11 Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present.

* Or, in outward appearance.

§ Or, reasonings.

† Or, reckon.

|| Gr, saith he.

‡ Or, to God.

12 *For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves : but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, *are not wise.*

13 *But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the †rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.*

14 *For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you : for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ :*

15 *Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours ; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be ‡enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,*

16 *To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's §line of things made ready to our hand.*

17 *But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

18 *For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.*

HERE the Apostle's tone changes. Hitherto he has been dealing with a happy situation. The long controversy was ended, and he poured out his heart in a flood of gratitude to God and affectionate congratulation and counsel to his penitent church. But here we find ourselves plunged back into the thick of the strife, and overwhelmed with a torrent of pained, indignant, and often scornful reproach. The explanation is that, though linked with the glad letter in the canonical record of the Corinthian correspondence, this and the ensuing chapters are no part thereof but the bulk, if not the whole, of the stern letter which, after his hasty visit to Corinth in the autumn of 55, he had written "out of great distress and anguish of heart through blinding tears" (see Introduction) ; and it is usefully interpolated here in order to elucidate frequent allusions in the course of the correspondence which would be hardly intelligible without it.

* Or, *understand it not.*

† Or, *line.*

‡ Or, *magnified in you.*

§ Or, *rule.*

That hasty visit had been a painful experience. The Apostle had paid it in the hope that personal remonstrance might succeed where letters had failed ; and, thinking to win the hearts of the Corinthians, he had dealt gently and graciously with them. But all in vain. Their passions were aroused, and his adversaries assailed him with cruel and often coarse insults, insomuch that, disdaining to engage in an unseemly and unprofitable brawl, he quietly withdrew and returned to Ephesus, and there wrote them this letter. Their bitter speeches rankled in his mind, and he could not conceal his resentment ; yet all the while his heart was full of sorrow and a tender yearning for his misguided disciples, and he shows it at the outset in his manner of addressing them. He appeals to them “ by the meekness and ”—not merely “ gentleness ” but—“ sweet reasonableness of Christ.” And more than that. “ I Paul myself,” he says, “ exhort you.” What may this mean ? When St. Ambrose of Milan wrote his memorable letter to the Emperor Theodosius, sternly censuring his massacre of the Thessalonians in the year 390 A.D., he was still mindful of the honour due to his high estate and his past devotion ; and, that no other might be privy to his shame, he dispensed with the service of an amanuensis and wrote the reproof with his own hand. “ I am writing with my own hand,” he said, “ that you alone may read it.” And so does the Apostle here. The glad letter he had dictated to Timothy (cf. i. 1), but neither Timothy nor any other must hear his upbraiding of his erring disciples, so graceless yet still so dear to him. “ I Paul myself exhort you.”

The drift of this passage appears when we observe that the Apostle is dealing indignantly with taunts which his Corinthian adversaries had cast at him. One was that “ to their face he was humble among them, though when far away so courageous against them ” (ver. 2), contrasting his kindly and winsome bearing with his manner in writing to them (e.g., 1 Cor. v, vi). Another was a sneer of “ the intellectuals ” that his censure of the moral license which they claimed (see exposition of 1 Cor. vi. 12-20) was “ walking according to the flesh.” A third (ver. 7) was the old cry of the Judaists—their repudiation of his

apostolic authority inasmuch as he had never known Christ in the days of His flesh or received his commission at His hands (see exposition of 1 Cor. i. 12). And they imputed his gentleness to a consciousness that he lacked authority.

All these he answers with the picturesque metaphor of a besieged fortress (vers. 3-6). His gracious dealing was a preliminary parley, summoning the garrison to surrender; and only if his overtures were rejected, would he assail it with the "divinely powerful weapons of his warfare." "For," he presently explains (vers. 8-11), "even if I boast somewhat too abundantly of our authority which the Lord gave for your upbuilding and not for your downpulling, I shall not be put to shame. That I may not seem as though I were merely 'terrifying you through my letters'—'His letters,' saith my critic, 'are indeed weighty and vigorous, but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible'—let such a one take this into his reckoning, that what we are in our speech by letter when far away, that shall we be also when we are among you and take action" (cf. xii. 1-3).

Herewith he turns to the Judaists and deals with them more particularly. They had charged him with "audacity" in matching himself with the accredited Apostles and usurping their prerogatives; and his retort is that, his critics were themselves the usurpers. Fully nine years ago at a conference in Jerusalem the original Apostles had recognised his divine commission, and a working agreement had been established—that he should evangelise the Gentiles and they the Jews (cf. Gal. ii. 1-10). And he had faithfully adhered thereto, never in the course of his wide missions "preaching the Gospel where Christ's name was known, lest he should be building on another man's foundation" (cf. Rom. xv. 20). So had he done when he came to Corinth. As a Gentile city it belonged to his proper domain; yet the Judaists had pursued him thither and were subverting his work.

VINDICATION OF APOSTOLIC CLAIMS (xi-xii. 10)

1. SELF-ABNEGATION

xi. 1-20

1 *Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly : and indeed *bear with me.*

2 *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy ; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

3 *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

4 *For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear †with him.*

5 *For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.*

6 *But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge ; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.*

7 *Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely ?*

8 *I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.*

9 *And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man : for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied : and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.*

* Or, ye do bear with me.

† Or, with me.

10 *As the truth of Christ is in me, *no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.*

11 *Wherefore ? because I love you not ? God knoweth.*

12 *But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion ; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.*

13 *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*

14 *And no marvel ; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*

15 *Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness ; whose end shall be according to their works.*

16 *I say again, Let no man think me a fool ; if otherwise, yet as a fool †receive me, that I may boast myself a little.*

17 *That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.*

18 *Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.*

19 *For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise.*

20 *For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.*

ONE of the hard words which were thrown at the Apostle during his unhappy visit to Corinth and which rankled in his mind, was "folly" or more properly "senselessness"; and here he makes effective play with it. "Would that ye could have patience with me in some little 'senselessness'! Nay, do have patience with me." And well they might. For what was called "senselessness" in him was his solicitude for them lest, as Eve was by the serpent (Gen. iii. 13), they should be "beguiled" by his critic (cf. x. 10)—the leader of those Judaists who had appeared in their midst and were preaching "another Jesus," "a different Spirit," and "a different Gospel" than he had preached to them (cf. Gal. i. 8, 9). With

* Gr. *this boasting shall not be stopped in me.*

† Or, *suffer.*

that obnoxious personage, he says sarcastically, they—not “might well bear” but—“were beautifully patient”; and should they not be patient with himself? “For I reckon,” says he, quoting the Judaists’ laudation of the original Apostles and their disparagement of his credentials, “that I am nothing inferior to ‘the superlative Apostles.’ And though I be a mere ‘layman’ (see exposition of Ac. iv. 13) in speech, I am no layman in knowledge. No, in every respect we have made this manifest in every one’s judgment in our relations with you.”

During his long ministry at Corinth (Sep., 51—Feb., 53) the Apostle had exacted no salary from his converts (cf. 1 Cor. ix), maintaining himself at first by following his craft of tent-making (cf. Ac. xviii. 1-3) and afterwards, as his ministry enlarged, by the liberality of the Macedonian churches, especially the ever generous church of Philippi (cf. Ph. iv. 15-19). It was not that he had no claim upon the Corinthians; but, wealthy though they were in comparison with the Macedonians (cf. viii. 1, 2), they were narrower of heart and, as he had told them (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 15), he would rather starve than accept a grudging remuneration. It was a shame to them that they had thus enjoyed their privileges at others’ expense, but a worse shame that they should have lent an ear to the malicious calumnies of the Judaists. The latter pointed the contrast between him and the other Apostles, who exacted maintenance, according to the Lord’s ordinance that “they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel”; and they construed his action as an acknowledgment that he lacked apostolic authority, insinuating moreover that it was a slight upon the Corinthians.

And what is his answer? He roundly charges them with personal chagrin. His independence was a rebuke to their own greed. It was known all over the province to their discredit; and nothing would have pleased them better than that he should emulate their example. But he would not thus play into their hands. “As Christ’s truth is in me, this boasting in regard to me will not be dammed up in the regions of Achaia. What I am doing I shall keep on doing, that I may cut off their outlet who are desirous of an outlet in order that, wherein they boast, they may be found on a level with us.”

“There is no character,” says Thackeray, “which a low-minded man so much mistrusts as that of a gentleman”; and it is no wonder that the Apostle’s generosity seemed “senselessness” to his critics. And so he turns the tables on them by quoting their methods. They were Jews, and they practised the familiar methods of the Jewish courts—the methods of arrogant ecclesiastics in all ages. See how he piles up the charges (ver. 20). “Ye are patient,” he says, “if one bringeth you into bondage,” referring to the Judaists’ insistence on the perpetual obligation of the ceremonial law, that intolerable “yoke of bondage” (cf. Ac. xv. 10; Gal. v. 1). “If one devoureth you”—a stinging allusion to their greedy exactions, reminiscent of our Lord’s indictment of the Rabbis (cf. Mt. xxiii. 4, where see exposition). “If one ‘catcheth’ you”—a retort of their charge that he “caught them by guile” (cf. xii. 16). “If one giveth himself lofty airs”—airs of official arrogance, flaunting their claim to apostolic ordination and commission (cf. iii. 1). “If one smiteth you on the face”—that worst of contumelies (cf. Mt. v. 39). Remember that every Jewish synagogue had its court, which inflicted pains and penalties, fines and even scourging (cf. xi. 24; Mt. x. 17). And remember what happened in the supreme court of the Sanhedrin both to our Lord and to the Apostle afterwards—how they were smitten on the mouth when they gave offence to its President, the Chief Priest (cf. Jo. xviii. 22; Ac. xxiii. 2). Evidently the Judaists practised such tyranny—a worse sort of “senselessness,” surely, than the generosity which they so designated in the Apostle; and to his wonderment the Corinthians tamely submitted to it. “Ye are sweetly patient with the ‘senseless,’ though in your sane senses!” (ver. 19).

2. HEROIC DEVOTION

xi. 21-33

21 *I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.*

22 *Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.*

23 *Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.*

24 *Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.*

25 *Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;*

26 *In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;*

27 *In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

28 *Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*

29 *Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?*

30 *If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.*

31 *The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.*

32 *In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me:*

33 *And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.*

HITHERTO the Apostle has been justifying the "senselessness," the "weakness," the lack of "boldness" which his Judaist critics saw in his dealings with the Corinthians, and which they construed as a confession that he was destitute of apostolic authority. Had he been an Apostle, he would have exercised an Apostle's privileges. He has torn their malicious sophistries to pieces, and now he takes higher ground and advances positive evidence of his apostleship. "I am speaking self-disparagingly, on the supposition that we have been 'weak'; but, whatever ground any one hath for 'boldness,' I have it too." And what is the evidence?

First he adduces the purity of his lineage (ver. 22); and here he has in view a taunt of the Judaists, which seemed to them a sufficient refutation of his claim to the dignity of apostleship. They had condemned him as, in the phrase of the period (see exposition of Ac. vi. 1), "a Hellenist," born and bred at Tarsus in Cilicia and thus, as they averred, tainted by a heathen environment, unlike the true Apostles, who were pure "Hebrews" nurtured in the atmosphere of the Holy Land. It was an illiberal prejudice of Judæan arrogance, and he contemptuously brushes it aside, justly avowing himself a blameless "Hebrew" with the pure blood of the chosen race in his veins, "an Israelite," an heir of the national traditions, "a son of Abraham," an heir of the Promise.

And then he claims that more than any was he "a minister of Christ." It was indeed a "bold" claim—worse than "senselessness"! "I am talking," says he in a sarcastic parenthesis (not "as a fool" but) "in very madness." Yet it was true, and he proves it by a recital of his missionary adventures, his "moving accidents by flood and field" during those nine heroic years. It was a veritable Odyssey; and his brief summary suggests what a stirring narrative St. Luke might have written had it been given him to recount the life-story of the great Apostle and not merely the part which he played in the progress of the Gospel. See how much is hinted here which is undiscovered in the Book of Acts. Nothing is told there of his five sentences by Jewish courts to the statutory penalty of "forty stripes" (cf. Dt. xxv. 2, 3), reduced in later days by Rabbinical scrupulosity

to "forty save one," lest the legal limit should be transgressed by accidental miscalculation; only one (cf. Ac. xvi. 22, 23) of his three beatings with Roman lictors' rods; nothing of those three shipwrecks, since his stranding on the island of Melita befell later, or his drifting on floating wreckage for a night and a day.

Wherefore this chronicle of "most disastrous chances" and "hairbreath 'scapes"? It is no braggart boasting, no weak plaint, no appeal to compassion. It is his answer to his enemies' denial of his apostleship, his vindication of his pre-eminent title to rank as "a minister of Christ"; and we utterly miss his purpose if it merely moves us to sentimental tears. It is like the answer of the veteran who, charged with treason, bared his breast and displayed his honourable scars; and we are dull and poor of understanding unless, like Sir Philip Sydney whenever he heard "the old song of Percie and Douglas," we find our hearts "moved more than with a trumpet."

Observe the final sentence (vers. 32, 33), so cold and prosaic a close to the thrilling passage and so inept a resumption after the Apostle's solemn attestation of its truth. It is another instance of his habit of adding marginal comments on perusing what he had written, like a modern writer's explanatory foot-notes. Read it as a foot-note to ver. 26—an example, confirmed by St. Luke (cf. Ac. ix. 23-25), of "perils by his own countrymen, perils by the heathen, perils in the city."

3. VISIONS AND REVELATIONS

xii. 1-10

1 *It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. *I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.*

2 *I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell ; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell : God knoweth ;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.*

3 *And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell : God knoweth ;)*

4 *How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not †lawful for a man to utter.*

5 *Of such an one will I glory : yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.*

6 *For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool ; for I will say the truth : but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.*

7 *And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

8 *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

9 *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

10 *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake : for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

* Gr. *for I will come.*

† Or, *possible.*

THE Apostle has been "glorying" or rather "boasting" of his heroic ministry, his sufferings for Christ; and was not this an unseemly employment? His excuse was that he had been compelled thereto by the detraction of his critics and the necessity of vindicating his apostleship. And now that he has accomplished the distasteful duty he turns to a more congenial argument and adduces not what he had done for Christ but what Christ had done for him. "Boast I must," he says according to the authentic text. "It is indeed unprofitable, but I shall come to visions and revelations of the Lord."

What is the difference between "visions" and "revelations"? A "vision" was supernatural. It is the word which St. Luke (i. 22) uses where he tells of the "vision" of Zacharias when "there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense"; and again (xxiv. 23) where he tells of the women's "vision of angels" at the open Sepulchre. And St. Paul uses it (Ac. xxiv. 19) where he tells of his "heavenly vision" when the Risen and Glorified Lord was manifested to him on the road to Damascus. The Eternal World continually encompasses us, "unheard because our ears are dull, unseen because our eyes are dim"; and a vision is the thinning of "this muddy vesture of decay" which "doth grossly close it in." The barrier of sense is removed, and for a season the visionary is "out of the body," released from its limitations, seeing what the natural eye cannot see and hearing what the natural ear cannot hear; whereas a "revelation" is merely the discovery by the grace of the Holy Spirit of a hitherto undreamed of significance in common experience.

Both visions and revelations had been largely vouchsafed to the Apostle; and here (vers. 2-6) he recounts two memorable visions which had fitted him for his apostolic ministry. Understand the language which he employs. The Rabbinical theologians pictured the Unseen World as a succession of spiritual realms, "the Seven Heavens" ascending one above another in ever fuller glory; and to each they gave a name. The lowest and nearest to "the smoke and stir of this dim spot which men call earth," they called "the Veil"; and it was gloomy, "since it beholds all the unrighteous deeds of men." The second, "the

Firmament," was the store-house of " fire, snow, and ice made ready for the Day of Judgment." The third, " the Clouds," was " far brighter and more brilliant " ; and it was the station of " the hosts of the armies ordained for the Day of Judgment." The fourth, " the Habitation," was the abode of those angelic orders, " thrones and dominations " (cf. Col. i. 16 ; Eph. i. 21), " in which praises are always offered to God." In the fifth, " the Dwelling," are the angels who carry the prayers of men to " the angels of the presence of the Lord," who in turn present these before the Throne (cf. Rev. v. 8). In the sixth, " the Place," are the Archangels, who " minister and make propitiation to the Lord for all the sins of the righteous." And finally the seventh, denominated in Hebrew *araboth*, " the Broad Fields," and in Greek *Paradise*, " the Garden " or " Pleasaunce " —the Heaven of Heavens (cf. 1 Ki. viii. 27), " where dwelleth the Great Glory, far above all holiness."

O happy harbour of the Saints !
 O sweet and pleasant soil !
 In thee no sorrow may be found,
 No grief, no care, no toil.

Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
 Continually are green ;
 There grows such sweet and pleasant flowers
 As nowhere else are seen.

And " in the midst of the Paradise of God was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month : and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

Fantastic as these devout imaginations may appear to our unaccustomed minds, they were the current coin of religious parlance in the Apostle's day ; and they furnish the interpretation of the two visions which he now recounts. The thing had happened, not " above fourteen," but simply " fourteen years ago " ; and since he was writing toward the close of the year 55, that was the year 41. And where was he then, and how employed ? After his three years' testimony at Damascus and his flight thence in 36 he retired to Tarsus and there remained until he was called to begin his apostolic ministry at Syrian Antioch in

45 (cf. Gal. i. 21-24 and Ac. ix. 30, where see exposition). During that long interval he was employed not merely in testifying his faith in his native province of Syria-Cilicia but in earnest meditation and seeking after God, and it was in the midst thereof that these two visions were vouchsafed him. See how he describes his experience. So supernatural was it, so alien from all that had ever befallen him, that it almost seemed to him in looking back on it as though it had happened to another and not to himself. "I know a man in Christ fourteen years ago—such a man rapt away as far as the Third Heaven."

That was his first vision ; and since the Third Heaven was the station of "the hosts of the armies ordained for the Day of Judgment," it was an awful vision of the righteousness of God. And what of the second ? "He was rapt away into Paradise," the Pleasaunce of God, "where dwelleth the Great Glory, far above all holiness"—a glad vision of that Grace which covers all our sin, that Love which pities and heals, that Presence which is peace and rest and fullness of joy for evermore.

And now he turns from visions to revelations. Visions indeed were revelations, but they were revelations supernaturally conveyed ; and since a high spiritual experience is apt to foster spiritual pride, God has other ways, painful yet safer, of communicating His revelations. "Lest," says the Apostle, according to the authentic text, "by revelations so transcendent I should be uplifted, there was given me a thorn (cf. Ezk. xxviii. 24) for my flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be uplifted." What does this mean ? Plainly, since it was "his flesh" that was affected, it was a physical affliction—doubtless that malady which had seized him in Pamphylia in midsummer of the year 47 (see exposition of Ac. xiii. 13) and clung to him ever afterwards. What distressed him was not its painfulness but its embarrassment of his ministry, recurring as it did whenever he was fatigued and hindering him from enterprises which he would fain have undertaken (see exposition of Ac. xvi. 6). Hence it is that he calls it "a thorn for his flesh," meaning that, in the expressive language of Scripture (cf. Job iii. 23, xix. 8 ; Hos. ii. 6), his way was "hedged in," "fenced up that he could not pass," "hedged up with thorns, so that he

could not find his paths." Again, he calls it "a messenger" or, as the Greek has it, "an angel (see exposition of Mt. i. 20) of Satan to buffet him." Satan means "the Adversary"; and for the Apostle he was always the adversary of the Gospel, seeking to hinder its progress (cf. 1 Th. ii. 18). And this it was that grieved him. His ever-recurring malady was an emissary of the vigilant and malignant Adversary, continually besetting and disabling him and frustrating his endeavours.

Surely it was not the Lord's will that he should carry so heavy a handicap; and "on this behalf he thrice"—not literally "three times" but "repeatedly," "over and over," "once and again and yet again" (see exposition of Mk. xiv. 30)—"besought the Lord that he might be rid of it." It seemed as though he besought in vain. His petition was denied. Yet his prayer was gloriously answered; and the very denial of his petition was the answer to his prayer. It was no audible response, no voice from Heaven. He read it in his own gracious experience. Observe what is written: not "He said unto me" but "He hath said unto me, 'My grace sufficeth thee; for power is perfected in weakness.'" This is the revelation vouchsafed to him, the truth discovered to him by his painful experience—that sanctified affliction is a blessed thing, a precious opportunity. And so he concludes: "Most gladly then will I rather glory in my weaknesses"—those weaknesses which his critics derided (cf. x. 10). And wherefore? Not merely, as our Version has it, "that the power of Christ may rest upon me"; nor even, as the Revisers have it suggestively in their margin, "that the power of Christ may spread a tabernacle over me." Here, as elsewhere in the New Testament (see exposition of Jo. i. 14) the Greek word for "tabernacle" or "tent" (*skéné*) was employed, by reason of the verbal assonance, to represent the Hebrew *shekinah*, the overshadowing cloud which had served of old as the visible token of the Lord's presence in His people's midst. And so is it written here: "That the Shekinah of Christ's power may overshadow me."

Observe that it was not his suffering merely that was thus precious to the Apostle. For mere suffering is a cruel thing, embittering the heart and making it rebellious. And rebelliousness

is fatal. Nor will mere patience suffice ; for mere patience is Stoicism. And the evangelical remedy lies in faith and love —loyal acceptance of the will of God, quiet and gentle confidence in the Saviour's sympathy, and a stedfast resolution to play a brave part and follow Him on the rough and painful road which, though it lead " through fire and through water," always " bringeth us out into a wealthy place." Thus and only thus is affliction sanctified ; and it is sanctified affliction that is the Cloud of the Lord's Presence, hallowing and glorifying our lives.

I am very weak ; and once my prayer
Was " Master, my weakness see,
And strengthen me that I may bear
The load Thou hast laid on me."

But Thou hast shown me a better way
And taught me a wiser prayer :
To Thine Altar I go and my weakness lay
A humble offering there ;

And I plead " Behold my weakness, Lord,
For serving Thee all unfit :
O take it, according to Thy good word,
And perfect Thy strength in it."

STERN REMONSTRANCE

xii. 11-xiii

11 *I am become a fool in glorying ; ye have compelled me : for I ought to have been commended of you : for in nothing am I behind the very chieftest apostles, though I be nothing.*

12 *Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.*

13 *For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you ? forgive me this wrong.*

14 *Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you ; and I will not be burdensome to you : for I seek not your's, but you : for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children,*

15 *And I will very gladly spend and be spent for *you ; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.*

16 *But be it so, I did not burden you : nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.*

17 *Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you ?*

18 *I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you ? walked we not in the same spirit ? walked we not in the same steps ?*

19 *Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you ? we speak before God in Christ : but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.*

20 *For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not : lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults :*

* Gr. *your souls.*

21 *And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.*

1 *This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.*

2 *I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time ; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare :*

3 *Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.*

4 *For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak *in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.*

5 *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates ?*

6 *But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.*

7 *Now I pray to God that ye do no evil ; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.*

8 *For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.*

9 *For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong : and this also we wish, even your perfection.*

10 *Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.*

11 *Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace ; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

12 *Greet one another with an holy kiss.*

13 *All the saints salute you.*

14 *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.*

* Or, with him.

IT is characteristic of a gentleman, says Cardinal Newman, that "he never speaks of himself except when compelled"; and this is the Apostle's excuse for his "boasting." "I have become 'senseless': it was ye that compelled me." It should have been unnecessary, but in view of his critics' denial of his apostleship he had to vindicate it. The evidence was conclusive, and the sole remaining count of their indictment was his serving them without remuneration. "Forgive me this injustice!" he cries with fitting sarcasm; and herewith he tells them that he has no thought of mending his ways in this particular. When next he visited them, as he purposed presently in order to deal summarily with the disorder, he would still take nothing from them. "Behold," he says, "this is now the third time (cf. xiii. 1) that I am ready to visit you," implying that he had already paid them a second visit—that hasty and painful visit whence he had just returned (see Introduction and exposition of ii. 1).

Here he glances again at two cruel aspersions. (1) That insinuation of the Judaists that in exacting no remuneration from the Corinthians he was putting a slight upon them (cf. xi. 11); and he playfully answers that he was rather playing a father's part by his children, wayward and ungrateful though they were. And (2) the foul calumny that his forgoing remuneration was "a crafty trick," and he was all the while making a profit by the collection for the poor at Jerusalem (cf. viii. 19-21). "I was never a burden on you, but I was all the while a 'trickster' and 'caught you (cf. xi. 20) by craft.'" His answer is that he had never had anything to do with the collection at Corinth. Soon after his settlement at Ephesus he had entrusted the negotiation to Titus and the colleague associated with him for the organisation of the enterprise in the Gentile churches; and how honourable their conduct had been the Corinthians were well aware.

The letter closes with a solemn warning. "Ye have been fancying all this while," says the Apostle according to the authentic text (ver. 19), "that we are making our defence to you." Far from it. They were not his judges (cf. 1 Cor. iv. 3-5); and he was not pleading his cause before them but rather summoning

them to repentance as a prophet of the Lord, and his concern was not his own vindication but their weal. "It is before God in Christ that we are talking, and it is all, beloved, for your upbuilding." His hope was that they would even yet hearken to his patient and earnest pleading; for their day of grace was hastening to its close. On the occasion of his second visit, that unhappy and unprofitable visit, he had intimated at his abrupt departure that he would return and deal effectively with the disorder, no longer reasoning and pleading with the culprits but arraigning them, citing witnesses, and pronouncing a legal decision (cf. Dt. xix. 15). And now he reiterates the ultimatum: "I have given warning, and that warning which I gave when I was with you the second time, I repeat now when I am far away, to those who have sinned in the past and to all the rest, that if I come back, I shall not spare."

How came it that he was so ready to put it to the touch and so confident of the issue? Familiar as he was with the Corinthian situation, he knew that the troublers were a minority, turbulent and aggressive but only a minority. His supporters were numerous, and there would, moreover, be not a few who, though honestly perplexed, would declare for the right when it came to a decision. Of this he had no doubt, since not only is the instinct of justice strong in the human breast but his cause was irresistible. He was an Apostle of Christ; and what was the evidence of his apostleship? "Ye are seeking," says he, "proof that it is Christ who talketh in me." And here it is: "He is not 'weak' (cf. x. 10) toward you; no, He is powerful among you. For though it was weakness that brought Him to the Cross, yet He liveth by God's power; and though we are weak in Him, yet we shall share His life in our dealing with you."

Thus fitly he closes the stern letter, as he had begun it (cf. x. 8), with an assertion of his apostolic authority and an assurance of the gracious purpose of his apostolic severity. "This is our prayer—your knitting together. Therefore it is that I am writing thus when far away, that when with you I may not handle you severely in the exercise of the authority which the Lord gave me for upbuilding and not for downpulling."

So the letter closes ; for the remaining verses (11-14), so sweet and tender, are the conclusion (after ix. 15) of the glad letter which he wrote to the penitent Corinthians some nine months later when the long strife was ended.

BS Smith, David, 1866-1932.
2341 The disciple's commentary on the New Testament,
S65 by David Smith... Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday,
1928a Doran & company, inc., 1928-32.
5 v. illus. (plan) 22-25cm.

v. 4

Vols. 1-3 have title: Commentary on the four Gospels (title of London edition: The disciple's commentary on the Gospels)

Vols. 4-5 have imprint: New York, R. Long & R. R. Smith, inc., 1932.

Contents.--[v. 1] Matthew, with introduction to the four Gospels.--[v. 2] Mark-Luke.--[v. 3] John.--v. 4. The Acts of the apostles to the Epistles to the Corinthians.--v. 5. Epistle to the Galatians to the book of Revelation.

1711898

